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Jerusalem-Sinner Saved: 3

OR,

GOOD NEWS

FOR THE

Vilest of Men.

Being HELP for

DESPAIRING SOULS

SHEWING

That Jesus Christ would have Mercy upon that Place offered to the

BIGGEST SINNERS.

The Third Edition

In which is added, An Answer to those Grand Objections that lie in the way of them that would believe: For the Comfort of such that fear they have sinned against the holy Ghost.

By JOHN BUNYAN of Bedford.

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TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

ONE reaſon which moved me to Write and Print this Little Book was, becauſe, tho' there are many Excellent Heart-affecting Diſcourſes in the World that tends to Convert the Sinner; yet I had a deſire to try this ſimple Method of mine: Wherefore I make bold *thus* to Invite and Encourage the *Worſt* to come to *Chriſt* for Life.

I have been Vile *my ſelf*, but have obtained Mercy, and I would have my Companions in Sin partake of Mercy too, and therefore I have *writ* this little Book.

The Nation doth ſwarm with vile Ones *now*, as ever it did ſince it was a Nation. My Little Book in ſome pla-

ees can ſcarce go from Houſe to Houſe but 'twill find a ſuitable Subject to ſpend it ſelf upon. Now ſince *Chriſt Jeſus* is willing to ſave the Vileſt, why ſhould they not by Name be ſomewhat acquainted with it, and bid come to him under that Name?

A great Sinner, when Converted, ſeems a booty to *Jeſus Chriſt* he gets by ſaving ſuch an one, why then ſhould both *Jeſus* loſe his Glory, and the Sinner loſe his Soul at once, and that for want of an Invitation?

I have found through God's grace, good ſucceſs in Preaching upon this Subject, and *perhaps* ſo I may, by my writing upon it too. I have as you ſee let down this net for a draught, the Lord catch ſome great Fiſhes by it for the magnifing of this Truth. There are ſome moſt Vile in *all* Mens eyes, and ſome are ſo in their *own* eyes too, but ſome have their Paintings to ſhroud their vileneſs under, yet they are naked and open unto the Eyes of him

him with whom we have to do: And for all these, God hath sent a Saviour *Jesus*: and to all these the Door is opened.

Wherefore prethee, Profane Man, give this little *Book* the reading. Come, *Pardon*, and a Part in Heaven and Glory, cannot be hurtful to the, Let not thy Lusts and Folly drive thee beyond the door of Mercy, since it is not lockt nor Bolted up against thee. *Manasseh* was a bad *Man*, and *Magdalen* a bad *Woman*: To say nothing of the *Thief* upon the *Cross*, or of the *Murderers* of *Christ*, yet they obtained *mercy*, *Christ* willingly received them.

And dost thou *think* that those once so bad, now they are in *Heaven*, *repent* them there, *because* they left their *sins* for Christ when they were in the *world*. I cannot *believe* but that thou *thinkest* they have verily got the *best* on't. why *Sinner*, do thou likewise: *Christ* at *Heaven* Gates, says to thee, *Come hither* and the *Devil* at the *Gates of Hell* does call thee *to come to him*. Sinner,

ſayeſt thou? Whither wilt thou go? Don't go into the *Fire*, there *thou* wilt be *burned* Don't let *Jeſus* loſe his *long*, *ing*, ſince tis for *thy Salvation* but *come to him and live.*

One word more and ſo I have done *Sinner*, here *thou* doſt hear of *Love*, prethee dont *provoke* it *by turning it in* to *wantonneſs*. He that dies for *ſlighting* Love ſinks deepeſt into Hell and will *there be tormented* by the *rememberance* of that evil more than by the *deepeſt cogitation* of all his *other ſins*. Take *heed* therefore, do not make *Love* thy *Tormentor*, *Sinner*.

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GOOD NEWS
For the Vileſt of Men.
OR
A Help for Deſpairing Souls

Luke xxiv. 47.
——— *Beginning at Jeruſalem.*

THE whole Verſe runs thus: *And that repentance and remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jeruſalem.*

The Words were ſpoken by Chriſt after he roſe from the Dead, and they are *here* rehearſed after an Hiſtorical manner, but do contain in them a formal Commiſſion, with a ſpecial *Clauſe*, therein. The Commiſſion is, as you ſee, for the Preaching of the Goſpel, and is very diſtinctly inſerted in the Holy Record by *Matthew* and *Mark*, *Go teach all Nations, &c. Go ye into all the World and preach the Goſpel unto every Creature*

Mat.

Matt. 28. 19. *Mark.* 16. 15. Only this *Clause* as in special mention by *Luke* who saith, That as Christ would have the Doctrine of Repentance and Remission of Sins preached in his Name among all Nations, so he would have the People of *Jerusalem* to have the first proffer thereof, *Preach it* saith Christ. *in all Nations: but begin at Jerusalem.*

The Apostle then, thought they had a Commission so large as to give them Warrant to go and preach the Gospel in all the World, yet by *this Clause* they were limited, as to the begining of their Ministry: They were to *begin* this Work at *Jerusalem. Begining at Jerusalem.*

Before I proceed to an Observation upon the Words I must (but briefly) touch upon two things: Namely.

1. Shew you what *Jerusalem now* was.
2. Shew you what it was to preach the Gospel to them.

For the first, *Jerusalem* is to be conensidered of, either,

1. With respect to the descent of her People: Or

With respect to her Preferance and Exaltation, Or,

3. With

3. With respect to her present State as to her Decays.

First, As to her *Desent*: She was from *Abraham*, the Sons of *Jacob*, a People that God singled out from the rest of the Nations to set his love upon them,

Seconly, As to her *Preference* or Exaltation, she was the place of God,s Worship and *that* which had in, and with her, the special Tokens and signs of God's Favour and Presence, above any other People in the World. Hence the Tribes went up to *Jerusalem* to worship, there was God's House; God's High Priest, God's sacrifices accepted and God's Eye, and God's Heart perpetually, *Psal.* 76. 1, 2. *Psal.* 122. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1 *Kings*: 9. 3. But.

Thirdly, we are to consider *Jerusalem* also in her Decays; for as she is so considered, she is the proper object of our Text, as will be further showed by and by.

Jerusalem, as I told you, was the place and seat of God's VVorship, but *now* decayed, degenerated, and apostatized. The VVord, the Rule of VVorship, was rejected of them, and in its place they had put and set up their own Traditions they

They had rejected also the most weighty Ordinances, and put in room thereof their own little things.) *Mat.* 15. *Mark* 7.) *Jerusalem* was therfore now greatly back-slidden, and become the place where Truth and True Religion was much defaced

It was also now become the very sink of Sin, seat of Hypocrisie, and the Gulf where true Religion was drowned, Here also now reigned Presumption, and ground less Confidence in GOD, which is the bane of souls. Amongst its Rulers, Doctors, and Leaders, Envy, Malice and Blasphemy vented it self against the Power of Godliness, in all places where it was espied: As also against the Promoters of it? yea, their Lord and Maker could no: escape them.

In a Word, *Jerusalem* was now become the shambles, the very Slaughter-shop for Saints. This was the place wherein the Members, Christ, and his People, were most horribly persecuted and murdered. Yea, so hardned at *this* time was this *Jerusalem* in her sins, that she feared not to commit the biggest and to bind her self by VVish under the guilt and damning evil of; saying, when she

ſhe had murdered the ſon of God, *His Blood be upon us and our Children.*

And though *Jeſus Chriſt* did both by Doctrine, Miracles, and Holineſs of Life, ſeek to put a ſtop to their Villanies; yet they ſhut their eyes, ſtopt their ears and reſted not, till, as was hinted before they had driven him out of the World. Yea, that they might, if poſſible, have extinguiſhed his Name, and exploded his Doctrine out of the World, they againſt all Argument, and in deſpit of Heaven, its mighty hand, and undeniable proof of his Reſurrection, did hire ſouldiars to invent a Lye, ſaying, *His Diſciples ſtole him away from the Grave?* on purpoſe that Men might not count him the Saviour of the World, nor truſt in him for the Remiſſion of Sins.

They were, ſaith *Paul*, contrary to all Men: For they did not only ſhut up the Door of Life againſt themſelves; but forbad that it ſhould be opened to any elſe, *Forbiding us* ſaith he, *to preach to the Gentiles, that they might be ſaved, to fill up their ſin alway, Mat.* 23. 25 *chap.* 15 7, 8, 9 *Mar.* 7. 6 7 8. *Mat.* 3. 7 8, 9, *Joh.* 8. 33 41 *Mat.* 27. 18. *Mar.* 3. 30, *Luk.* 2. 65, *Mat.* 23 37, *Luk.* 13, 33, 34, *Pſal.* 2 22, 23 *Chap.*

4. 10. *Mat*, 27 25, *chap* 20, 11, 12 13, 14, 15, 1 *Theſ*, 2. 14, 15, 16.

This is the City, and *theſe* are the *People*, this is their *Character*, and *theſe* are their *Sins* Nor can there be produced thir parallel in all *this* World. Nay, *what* World! *what* People *what* Nation for Sin, and tranſgreſſion, *could*, or *can* be compared to *Jeruſalem*! Eſpecially if you joyn to the matter of fact, the Light they ſinned againſt, and the Patience which they abuſed. Infinite was the Wickedneſs upon this account which they commited.

After all their abuſings of wiſe men, and Prophets, God ſent unto them *John Baptiſt*, to reduce them, and then his Son to redeem them; but they would be nither reduced nor redeemed, but perſecuted both to the Death. Nor did they, as I ſaid, ſtop here; the Holy Apoſtles they afterwards perſecuted alſo to Death, even ſomany as they could, the reſt they drove from them unto the utmoſt Corners.

Secondly I come now to ſhow you what it was to preach the Goſple to them. It was, ſaith *Luke*, to preach to them *Repentance and remiſſion of Sins in Chriſts*

Chriſts Name. Or as *Mark* has it, *to bid them repent and belive the Goſpel,* Mar. 1. 15. Not that Repentance is a cauſe of Remiſſion, but a ſign of our hearty reception thereof. Repentance is therefore here put to intimate, that no pretended Faith of the Goſpel is good, that is not accompanied with it. And this he doth on purpoſe 'cauſe he would not have them deceive themſelves: For with what Faith can he expect remiſſion of Sins in the name of Chriſt, that is not heartily ſorry for them? Or how ſhall a man be able to give to others a ſatisfactory account of his unfeigned ſubjection to the Goſpel, that yet abides in his impenitency?

Wherefore Repentance is here joined with Faith in the way of receiving the Goſpel. *Faith* is that without which it cannot be received *at all*: And *Repentance*, that without which it cannot be received *unfeignedly*. When therefore Chriſt ſays he would have Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins preached in his Name among all Nations; it is as much as to ſay, *I will that all men every where be ſorry for their ſins, and accept of mercy at Gods hand throw me left they fall under*

der his wrath in the Judgment. For as ſll aid without Repentance, what pretence ſoever men have of Faith, they cannot eſcape the wrath to come. where For *Paul* ſaith *God Commands all men every where to repent* (in order to their Salvation) *becauſe he hath apointed a day in the which he will Judge the World in Righteouſneſs by that man whom he hath ordained,* Acts 17. 30.

And now to come ſo this *clauſe Begining at Jeruſalem*: That is that Chriſt would have *Jeruſalem* have the firſt offer of the Gospel.

1. This cannot be ſo commanded, becauſe they had not any more right for themſelves thereto then had any of the Nations of the world; for their Sins had diveſted them of all ſelf-deſervings.

2. Nor yet becauſe they ſtood upon the *advance ground* with the worſt of the Sinners of the Nations. Nay rather the Sinners of the Nations, had the *advance ground* of them: For *Jeruſalem* was long before ſhe had tadded this Iniquity to her ſin, worſe than the very Nations that God caſt out before the Children of *Iſrael* 2, *Chron,* 33.

3. It muſt therefore, follow that the

Clauſe. Begin at Jeruſalem was put into this Commiſſion of meer Grace, and compaſſion Even from the *overflowing* of the Bowels of Mercy For indeed they were the worſt and ſo in the deplorable condition of any People under the Heavens

Whatever therefore their relation was to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, or *Jacob*, however they formerly had been the People among whom God had placed his Name & Worſhip, they were now degenerated from God more than the Nations were from their Idols, and were become guilty of the higheſt Sins which the People of the Word were capable of Committing Nay, none can be capable of committing of ſuch *pardonable* Sins as they committed againſt their God, when they ſlew his Son, and Perſecuted his name, and Word.

From theſe Words therefore thus explained, we gain this Obſervation;

That Jeſus Chriſt would have mercy offered in the firſt place to the biggeſt Sinners.

That theſe *Jeruſalem* Sinners were the biggeſt Sinners that ever were in the World I think none will deny that believes that Chriſt was the beſt Man that

ever was in the world and also was their Lord God. And that they were to have the first *offer of his Grace*, the Text is as clear as the Sun; for it saith, *Begin at Jerusalem Preach*, saith he *Repentance, and remission of sins to the Jerusalem sinners*, to, the *Jerusalem sinners* in the *first place*, One would thought, since the *Jerusalem-sinners* were the worst, and greatest Sinners, Christ's greatest enemies, and those that not only despised his Person, Doctrine, and Miracles, but that a little before had had their hands up to their elbows in his Heart blood That he should rather have said, Go into all the world, and Preach Repentance and Remission of Sins among all Nations and after that, offer the same to *Jerusalem* Yea it had been infinite Grace if he had said so but what Grace is this? Or what Name shall we give it, when he commands that this Repentance and Remission of Sins which is designed to be preached in all Nations should first be offered to *Jerusalem* in the first place to the worst of Sinners:

Nor was this the first time that the Grace which was in the heart of Christ, *thus* shewed it self to the world. For

while

while he was yet *alive* even while He was *yet in Jeruſalem* and perceived *even* among theſe *Jeruſalem-ſinners* which was the moſt vile amongſt them, he ſtill in his preaching did ſignifie that he had a deſire that the worſt of *theſe* worſt ſhould in the *firſt place* come unto him. The which he ſheweth where *he ſaith* to the better for them, *The Publicans and Harlots enter into the Kingdom of God before you*, Matt. 21. 13. Alſo when he compared *Jeruſalem* with the Sinners of the Nations then he commands that the *Jeruſalem-ſinners* ſhould have the Goſpel at preſent confined to them. *Go not* ſaith he, *into the way of the Gentiles, and into any of the Cities of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.* Matt. 10. 5, 6. chap. 23, 37. But go *rather* to them, for they were in the moſt fearful *plight.*

Theſe therefore muſt have the *Cream* of the Goſpel, namely, the firſt *offer* thereof in his Life-time: Yea. when he depaſrted out of the World, he left this as part of his laſt Will with his Preachers, that they alſo ſhould offer it *firſt* to *Jeruſalem.* He had a mind. a careful mind, as it ſeems to priviledge the worſt

of sinners with the first offer of Mercy and to take from among *them* a People to be the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. The fifteenth of *Luke* also is amous for this, where the Lord Jesus takes fmore care, as appears here by three Parables for the lost Sheep, lost Groat and the Prodigal son, then for the other sheep the other Pence, or for the son that said he had never transgressed. Yea he shew that there is Joy in Heaven, among the Angels of God, at the repentance of one Siner, more then over Ninety and nine Just Persons, which need no repentance, *Luke* 15.

After this manner therefore the mind of Christ was set on the Salvation of the bigest Sinners in his Life-time. But joyn to this, *this* Clause, which he carefully put into the Apostles Commission to preach, when he departed hence to the Father; and when you shall see that his Heart was vehemently set upon it for these were part of his last words with them, *Preach my Gospel to all Nations, but see that you may begin at Jerusalem.*

Nor did the Apostles overlook *this* Clause, when their Lord was gone into Heaven

Heaven: they went *first* to them of *Jeruſalem*, and preached Chriſt's Goſpel to them. They abode alſo there for a ſeaſon and time, and preached it to no body elſe, for they had regard to the Commandment of their Lord.

And it is to be obſerved, namely, that the firſt Sermon which they preached to the very worſt of theſe *Jeruſalem ſinners*; even to thoſe that were the murderers of *Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts 2. 23. For theſe are part of the Sermon: *Ye took him, and by wicked hands have Crucified and ſlain him* Yea the next Sermon and the next, and alſo the next to that was preached to the ſelf ſame murderers to the end they might be Saved, *Acts* 3 14, 15, 16, *chap.* 4, 10, 11, *chap.* 5. *chap.* 7. 52.

But we will return to the firſt Sermon that was preached to thoſe *Jeruſalem-ſinners*, by which will be manifeſt more than Great grace, if it be duly conſidered.

For after that *Peter* and the reſt of the Apoſtles, had in their Exhortation perſwaded theſe wretches to believe that they had killed the Prince of Life, and

after they had duly fallen under the guilt of their Murder, saying, *Men and Brethren what shall we do?* He replies by an universal Tender to them all in general considering them as *Christ*-killers, *That if they were sorry for what they had done, and would be Baptised for the Remission of their sins in his Name, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*, Acts. 2. 37, 38.

This he said to them all, though he knew that they were such sinners: Yea, he said it without the least stick, or stop or pause of Spirit, as to whether he had best to say so or no. Nay, so far off, was *Peter* from making an Objection against one of them, that by a particular Clause in his Exhortation, he endevours, that not one of them may escape the Salvation offered. *Repent* saith he, *and be Baptized every one of you.* I shut out *never a one of you.* For I am commanded by my Lord to deal with you as it were one by one by the word of his Salvation. But why speaks he so particularly Oh! there were reasons for it. The People with whome the Apostles were now to deal as they were Murderers of our Lord, and to be charged in the general

neral

neral with his Blood, ſo they had their various and particular acts of Villany in the guilt thereof, now lying upon their Conſciences. And the Guilt of theſe their various and particular acts of wickedneſs, could not perhaps, be preached to a removal thereof but by this particular Application. Repent *every one of you*; be Baptized *every one of you* in his Name, for the remiſſion of Sins, and you ſhall, *every one of you*, receive the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt.

Object. *But I was one of them that plotted to take away his life: May I be ſaved by him?*

Peter. Every one of you.

Object. *But I was one of them that bare falſe Witneſs againſt him*: Is *there Grace for me?*

Peter For every one of you.

Object. *But I was one of them that cryed out, Crucifie, Crucifie him; and that deſired that* Barrabas *the Murderer might live rather then him. What will become become of me think you?*

Peter I am to preach Repentance and remiſſion of Sins to *every one of you*, ſays Peter,

Object. *But* I *was one of them that di*
ſpit in his face when he ſtood before his Ac
cuſers. I *alſo was one that mocked him whe*
in anguiſh he hanged bleeding on the tree.
there room for me?

Peter. For every one of you, ſays Pete

Object. *But I was one of them that in h*
extremity ſaid Give him Gall and Vinega
to drink; why may not I *expect the ſam*
when anguiſh and guilt is upon me?

Peter Repent of theſe your wicked
neſſes, and here is remiſſion of ſins *f*
every one of you,

Object: *But* I *railed on him* I *reviled hi*
I *hated him,* I *rejoyced to ſee him mocked*
by others. Can there be any hopes for me

Peter. There is for every one of you
Repent and be Baptized every one of you.
the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the Remiſſi
of Sins. and ye ſhall receive the Gift of
Holy Ghoſt. O! what a Bleſſed *Every*
of you is here! *How* willing was *Pe*
and the Lord *Jeſus*, by his Miniſtry.
catch theſe Murderes with the word
the Goſpel. that they might be ma
monuments of the Grace of God! Ho
unwilling I ſay, was he, that any of the
ſhould eſcape the hand of Mercy! Y
wh

what an amazing wonder is it, to think, that above all the World, and above every body in it. Theſe ſhould have the firſt offer of Mercy *begining at Jeruſalem*.

But was there not ſomething of moment in this clauſe of the Comiſſion? did not *Peter* think you, ſee a great deal in it, that he ſhould thus begin with theſe Men, and thus offer, ſo particularly. this Grace to each particular man of them?

But as I told you, This is not all, Theſe *Jeruſalem ſinners* muſt have this offer again and again; *every one of them*, muſt be offered it over and over. Chriſt would not take their firſt rejection for a denial; nor their Second Repulſe for a denial, But he will have grace offered once and twice, and thrice to theſe *Jeruſalem ſinners*. Is not this amazing Grace, Chriſt will not put off. Theſe are the Sinners that are ſinners indeed. They are ſinners of the Biggeſt ſort, conſequently ſuch as Chriſt can, if they convert and be ſaved beſt ſerve his ends and deſigns upon of which more anon.

But what a pitch of grace is this, Chriſt is minded to amaze the World, and to ſhow that he acteth not like the

Children of Men. This is that which he said of old 'I will not execute the fierce 'nes of my wrath, I will not return to 'destroy *Ephraim*, for I am God and not Man *Hos.* 11 9, This is not the manner of Men, Men are shorter winded, Men are soon moved to take Vengeance, and to right themselves in a way of wrath and Indignation, but God is full of grace full of patience ready to forgive & one that delights in Mercy, All that is seen in our text The biggest sinners must *first* be offered Mercy; they must I say, have the Cream of the Gospel offered unto them

But we will a little proceed. In the Third Capter we find, that they who escaped Converting by the first Sermon are called upon again, to accept of Grace and Forgiveness for their Murder committed upon this Son of God. You have killed; yea, *you have denyed the Holy one and the Just, and desired a Murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the Prince of life* Mark he falls again upon the very Men that actually were as you have it in the Chapters following his

very *Betrayers and Murderers*, acts 3, 14, 15, as being loath that they should escape the Mercy of Forgiveness and Exhorts them again to Repent that their sins may be blotted out Ver 19 &c.

Again in the fourth Chapter, he charges them afresh with the Murder, Ver 10 But withal tells them *Salvation is in no other*, Then Like a heavenly decoy, he puts himself also among them, to draw them the better under the Net of the Gospel saying there is *none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved* ver 12

In the fifth Chapter you find them railling at him, because he continued preaching among them Salvation in the Name of *Jesus*, but he tells them that that very *Jesus* whom they had slain and hanged on a Tree, him God had raised up and exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of Sins, ver. 29 30, 31 Still insinuating, that tho they had killed him, and to this day rejected him, yet his business was to bestow upon them, Repentance and Forgiveness of sins

'Tis true, after they began to kill again, and when nothing but killing

would ſerve their turn; then they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word. Yet even ſome of them ſo hankered after the Converſion of the *Jews*, that they preached the Goſpel only to them. Alſo the Apoſtles ſtill made their abode at *Jeruſalem*. in hopes that they might yet let down their Net for another draught of theſe *Jeruſalem-ſinners*, Nither did *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who were the Miniſters of God to the *Gentiles*, but offer the Goſpel in the firſt place to thoſe of them that for their wickedneſs were ſcattered like Vagabonds among the *Nations*: Yea, and when they rendered Rebellion and Blaſphemy for their Service and *Love*; they Replyed, *It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to them*, *Acts*, 1. 8. *chap*: 13. 46 47.

Nor was this their Preaching unſucceſsful among theſe People: But the Lord *Jeſus* ſo wrought with the Word *thus* ſpoken, that thouſands of them came flocking to him for Mercy. Three thouſand of them cloſed with him at the firſt and afterwards two thouſand more; for now they were in number about five thou

ſand, whereas before Sermons were preached to theſe Murderers, the number of the Diſciples were *not above an hundred & twenty, Act* 1. 15. *chap.* 2. 41. *Chap.* 4. 4.

Alſo among theſe People that thus flocked to him for Mercy, there was *a great Company of the Prieſts, chap* 6. 7. Now the Prieſts were they that were the *greateſt* of theſe *biggeſt* Sinners; they were the Ringleaders they were the Inventors and Ringleaders in the miſchief 'Twas they that Set the People againſt the Lord *Jeſus*, and that was the cauſe why the uproar increaſed, until *Pilate* had given Sentence upon him. *The chief Prieſts and Elders*, ſays the Text, *perſwaded* (the People) *the Multitude, that they ſhould ask* Barrabbas, *and deſtroy Jeſus* Mat. 27. 20. And yet *behold*, the Prieſts yea a *great* company of the Prieſts, *became obedient to the Faith.*

Oh the Greatneſs of the Grace of *Chriſt*! That he ſhould be thus in love with the Souls of the *Jeruſalem-ſinners*! *That he ſhould be thus delighted with the Salvation of the* jeruſalem ſinners, That he ſhould not only *will* that his Goſpel ſhould be offered them, but that it

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should be offered unto them *first* and *before* other Sinners were admitted to a hearing of it; *Begin at Jeruſalem.*

Was this Doctrine well believed, where would there be place for a doubt, or a fear of the Damnation of the Soul, if the Sinner be penitent, How bad a Life ſoever he has lived, how many ſoever in number are his ſins.

But this Grace is hid from the Eys of Men, the Devil hides it from them for he knows it is alluring; he knows it has an attracting Vertue in it. For this is it, that above all Arguments can draw the Soul to God.

I cannot help it, but muſt let Drop another Word: The firſt Church, the *Jeruſalem*-Church; from whence the Goſpel was to be ſent into all the World, was a Church made up of *Jeruſalem-ſinners.* Theſe great Sinners were here the moſt ſhining Monuments of the exceeding Grace of God.

Thus you ſee, I have proved the Doctrine; and that, not only by ſhewing you that this was the practice of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Life-time; but his laſt Will when he went up to God; ſaying *Begin to preach at Jeruſalem.*

Yea

Yea, it is yet further manifested, in that when his Ministers first began to preach to others, he joyned his Power to the Word, to the Converting of thousands of his betrayers and Murderers; and also many of the Ringleading Priests, to the Faith.

I shall now proceed, and shall shew you

1 *The Reasons of the point.*

2 *And then make some Application of the whole.*

The Observation you know is this, *Jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners*, to the *Jerusalem sinners*; *Preach Repentance, and remission of sins, in my Name, among all Nations, Begining at Jerusalem.*

The Reasons of the Point are,

First, *Because the biggest Sinners have most need thereof.* He that has most need, Reason says, should be helped first. I mean, when a helping hand is offered, and now it is. For the Gospel of the Grace of God is sent to help the World *Acts*, 16. 9. But the biggest Sinner has most need. Therefore in reason, when mercy is sent down from Heaven to men, the worst of men should have the first offer

ſer of it: *Begin at Jeruſalem:* This is the reaſon which the Lord *Chriſt* himſelf renders, why in his Life-time he left the beſt. and turned him to the worſt; why he ſat ſo looſe from the Righteous and ſtruck ſo cloſe to the Wicked. *The whole* ſaith he, *have no need of the Phyſician, but the ſick. I came not to call the Righteous, but ſinners to repentance* Mark. 2. 5. 16, 17

Above, you read, that the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſaid to his Diſciples, *How is it that he eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners?* Alas they did not know the reaſon. But the Lord renders them one, and *ſuch* an one, as is both natural and cogent; ſaying, *Theſe* have *need moſt need.* Their great neceſſity requires that I ſhould be moſt friendly, and ſhew my grace firſt to them.

Not that the other were ſinleſs, and ſo had no need of a Saviour: But the Publicans, *and their Companions, were the biggeſt ſinners, they were, as to View, worſe then the* Scribes, *and therefore in reaſon ſhould be helpid firſt, becauſe they had moſt need of a Saviour.*

Men that are at the point to dye, have more need of the Phyſician, then they that

that [illegible] but now and then troubled with an Heart fainting-qualm. The Publicans and Sinners were, as it were, in the mouth of Death, Death was swollowing of them down; and therefore the Lord *Jesus* receives them first, offers them mercy first. *The whole have no need of the Physician, but the Sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.* The Sick, as I said, is the biggest Sinner whether he sees his Disease or not. He is stained from Head to Foot, from Heart to Life and conversation, This man in every mans judgment, has the most need of mercy, There is nothing attends him from Bed to Board, and from board to Bed again, but the visible characters, and obvious symtoms of eternal damnation. This therefore is the man that has need, most need, and therefore in reason should be helped in the first place, Thus't was with the people concerned in the Text, they were *the worst of sinners Jerusalem sinners*, sinners of the higgest size. and therefore such as had the greatest need, wherefore they must have mercy offered to them, before it be offered any where in the World, *Begin at Jerusalem*. offer mercy first to a

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Jeruſalem-ſinner: This man has moſt need, he is fartheſt from God, neareſt to Hell, and ſo one that has *moſt need*. This mans ſins are in *number* the *moſt*, in *cry* the *loudeſt*, in *weight* the *heavieſt*, and conſequently will ſink him ſooneſt, Wherefore he has moſt need of mercy: This man is ſhut up in Satans hand, faſteſt bound in the cords of his ſins. one that juſtice is whetting his Sword to cut off, and therefore has moſt need, not only of mercy, but that it ſhould be extended to him in the firſt place.

But a little further, to ſhew you the true nature of this Reaſon, to wit, *That Jeſus Chriſt would have mercy offer'd in the firſt place to the biggeſt ſinners.*

Firſt, Mercy ariſeth from *Bowels* and Compaſſion, from Pity, and from a feeling of the Condition of thoſe in miſery. *In his Love and in his Pity, he ſaveth us.* And again, *The Lord is pitiful, very pitiful, and of the great mercy.* Iſa. 63. 9; Iam. 5, 11.

Now where Pity and Compaſſion is, there is yearning of Bowels, and where there is that, there is a readineſs to help.

help. And I say again, The more deplorable and dreadful the Condition is the more directly doth Bowels and Compassion turn themselves to such. and offer help and deliverance. all this flows from our first Scripture proof, *I came to call them that have need*, to call them *first*, where the rest look on, and murmur. *How shall I give the up. Ephraim, Ephrim* was a Revolter fom God, a man that had given himself up to Deviliſm: A company of men, the ten Tribes, that worshipped Devils, while *Judah* kept with his God. But *how should* I *give thee up Ephraim; How shall* I *deliver thee, Israel; How shall* I *make thee as Admah, How shall set thee as Zeboim* (and yet thou art worse *then they. nor has Samaria committed half thy sins*, Ezek 16, 46. 47. 48. 49, 50, 51. *My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kinled together*, Hos, 11. 8.

But where do you find that ever the Lord did thus rowl in his Bowels for; and after any Self-righteous man, No, no, they are the Publicans and Harlots, Idolaters and *Jerusalem sinners* for whom his Bowels thus yearn and tumble about within him, For alas poor Worms they have most need of mercy. Had

Had not that good *Samaritan* more compassion for that man that fell among Theives, (though *that* fall was occasioned by his going from the place where they worshiped God, to *Jericho*, the cursed City) then we read he had for any other besides? His *Wine* was for him, his *Oyl* was for him, his *Beast* for him his *Penny*, his *Care*, and his *Swadling-bands* for him- for alas. Wretch he had most need, *Luke* 10 30, 31, 32 33, 34, 35.

Zacheus the Publican, the *cheief* of the Publicans, one that had made himself the richer by wronging of others; the Lord at that time singleth him out from all the rest of his brother Publicans, and that in the face of many Pharisees, proclaimed in the audience of them all That that day Salvation was come to his house, *Luke* 19. 1, 2, 3. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

The Woman also that had been bound down by *Satan* for eighteen years together, his compassion putting him upon it, he loosed her, though those that stood by snarled at him for so doing, *Luke*, 13, 11, 12, 13,

And why the woman of *Serapeta*, and why

why *Naaman* the *Syrian*, rather then Widows and Lepers in *Israel*, but because their conditions were more deplorable (for that) the y were most forlorn, and farthest from help? *Luke*. 4. 25. 27:

But I say, why all these' *thus* named? why have we not a Catalogue of some Holy men that were so in their own eyes and in the judgment of the World? *Alas* if at any time any of them are mentioned, how seemingly coldly doth the Record of Scripture present them to us? *Nicodemus*, a Night-Professor, and *Simon* the Pharisee, with his Fifty Pence, and their great ignorance of the methods of Grace, we have now and then touched upon.

Mercy seems to be out of his proper Channel when it deals with Self-righteous men, but then it runs with a full stream, when it extends it self to the biggest sinners, As God's r ercy is not regulated by Mans goodness, nor obtained by mans worthiness, so not much let out by saving of any such. but more of this anon.

And here let me ask my *Reader* a Question; Suppose that as thou art walking by

by ſome Pond-ſide: thou ſhouldeſt eſpy in it four or five Children all in danger of drowning, and one in more danger then all the reſt; Judge which has moſt need to be helped out firſt? I know thou wilt ſay, he that is neareſt drowning, Why this is the caſe; the bigger Sinner, the nearer drowning, therefore the bigger ſinner, the more need of mercy, Yea of help by mercy in the firſt place, And to this our Text agrees when it ſaith, *Beginning at Jeruſalem*: Let the *Jeruſalem ſinner* ſays Chriſt, have the *firſt* offer the *firſt* invitation, the *firſt* tender of my grace and mercy- for he is the biggeſt ſinner and ſo has moſt need there of.

Secondly Chriſt jeſus would have mercy offered in the *firſt place* to the giggeſt ſinners, becauſe when *they*, any of *them* receive it, *it redounds moſt to the fame of his Name.*

Chriſt jeſus, as you may perceive, has put him ſelf under the term of a Phyſicion, a Doctor for curing of Diſeaſes: And you know that Applauſe, and a Fame is a thing that Phyſicians much deſire. That is it that helps them to *Patients* and that alſo that will help their

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Patients to commit themſelves to their Skill for Cure, with the more confidence and repoſe of Spirit, and the beſt way for a *Doctor* or *Phyſician* to get themſelves a Name, in the firſt place to take in hand, and Cure ſome ſuch as all others have given off for loſt and dead, Phyſicians get neither Name nor Fame by pricking of *Weals* or picking out *Thiſtles*, or by laying of Plaiſters to the *ſcratch* of a *Pin* Every old Women can do this: But if they will have a Name and a Fame, if they will have it quickly they muſt, as I *ſaid*, do *ſome* great and *deſperate* Cures, Let them fetch one to Life that was Dead, let them recover one to his Wits that was Mad, let them make one that was born Blind, to ſee, or let them give ripe Wits to a Fool, theſe are notable Cures, and he that can do thus: and if he doth thus firſt, he ſhall have the *Name* and *Fame* he deſires. he may lye a Bed till Noon.

Why Chriſt *Jeſus forgiveth Sins for a Name, and ſo begets of himſelf a good Report in the Hearts of the Children of men And therefore in reaſon, muſt be willing as alſo he did command, that his mercy ſhould*

should be offered first to the biggest Sinners,

I will forgive their sins, iniquities, and transgressions, *says he*, and it shall turn to me for a name of joy, and a Praise, and an Honour, before all the nations of the earth, *Jer.* 33. 8, 9.

And hence it is that at his first appearing he took upon him to do such mighty works, He got a Fame thereby, he got a Name thereby, Mat 4. 23, 24.

When *Christ* had cast the legion of Devils out of the man of whome you read, *Mark* 5, He bid him go home to his Friends and tell it, *Go home* saith he, *to thy Friends, and tell them how great things God has done for thee, and has had compassion on thee*, Mark 5. 19. *Christ Jesus* seeks a Name, and desireth a Fame in the World, and therefore, for the better to obtain that, he commands that mercy should first be proffered to the biggest sinners because by the saving of one of them he makes all Men Marvel. As 'tis said of the Man last mentioned, whom *Christ* cured toward the beginning of his Ministry: *And he departed*, says the Text, *and began to publish in Decapolis*

polis, how great things Jesus had done for him, and all Men did Marvel, Ver. 20.

When *John* told *Christ*, that they saw one casting out Devils in his Name, and they forbad him because he followed not with them: What is the answer of *Christ*? *Forbid him not for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my Name, that can lightly speak evil of me*. No, they will rather cause his praise to be heard, and his Name to be Magnified, and so put Glory on the head of Christ.

But we will follow a little our Metaphor, Christ as I said, has put himself under the Term of a Physician, Consequently he desireth that his Name, as to the Salvation of sinners, may spread abroad that the World may see what he can do. And to this end, has not only commanded that the biggest sinners should have the first offer of his mercy, but has as Physicians do, put out his Bills, and published his doings, that things may be read and talked of, Yea he has moreover in these his blessed bills the Holy Scriptures, I mean, inserted the very Names of Persons the places of their abode, and the great Cures that by

by the Means of his Salvations he has wrought upon them to this very end Here is *Item*, Such a one by my Grace and redeming blood, was made a Monument of Everlasting Life; and such a one by my perfect Obedience, became an Heir of Glory, And then he produceth their Names,

Item, I saved *Lot*, from the Guilt and Damnation that he had procured to himself by his *incest*

Item I saved David from the Vengeance that belonged to him for committing of Adultry and murder.

Here is also *Soloman*. *Manasseth*, *Peter*, *Magdalin*, and many others made mention of in this book. Yea, here are their Names, their Sins, and their Salvations recorded together, that you may read: and know what a Saviour he is and do him Honour in the World, For why are these things thus recorded but to shew to Sinners what he can do to the praise and glory of his Grace,

And it is observable, as I said before we have but very little of the Salvation, of little Sinners mentioned in Gods book because that would not have answered

the

the design, to wit, to bring Glory and fame to the Name of the Son of God.

What should be the Reason, think you why Christ should so easily take a denial of the Great ones, that were the Grandure of the World, and struggle so hard for Hedge creepers and High-way men, (as the Parable, *Luke*, 14. seems to import he doth) but to shew forth the riches of the Glory of His Grace to His praise? This I say, is one Reason to be sure.

They that had their Grounds, their yoke of Oxen, and their Marriage joys were invited to come, but they made their excuse, and that Served the turn. But when he comes to deal with the worst he saith to his Servant, Go ye *out* and *bring* them in hither, *Go out quickly and bring in hither the poor, the maimed* the *halt and the blind. And they did so.* And he said again, *Go out into the high ways and Hedges and compel them to come in that my House may be filled* Luke 14, 18, 19, 23. These poor, Lame maimed blind hedge-creepers, and high-way men

men, *Muſt* come in, *Muſt* be forced in. These, if ſaved, will make his Merits ſhine.

When *Chriſt* was crucified and hanged up between the Earth and Heavens, there were two Theives crucified with him; and, behold, he lays hold of one of them and will have him away with him to Glory. Was not this a ſtrange act, and a diſplay of unthought-of grace? Were there none but Thieves there, or were the reſt of that company out of his reach? could he not, think you have ſtooped from the Croſs to the Ground & have laid hold on ſome honeſter man if he would; Yes doubtleſs Oh, but then he would not have diſplayed his Grace, nor ſo have purſued his own deſigns; namely, to get himſelf a praiſe, and a name; But now he has done it to purpoſe. For who that ſhall read this *Story*, but muſt Confeſs that the Son of God is full of Grace; for a proof of the Riches thereof he left behind him when upon the Croſs, he took the Thief away with him to glory. *Nor can this one act of his be buried*: It will be talked of

of to the end of the World to this praise *Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and will declare thy greatness They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy power. To make known to the Sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom*, Psal 145, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

When the Word of God came among the Conjurers and those South-sayers that you read of *Act:* 19, and had prevailed with some of them to accept of the grace of *Christ*, the Holy Ghost records it with a boast for that it would redound to his praise, saying,

And many of them that used curious Arts brought their Books together and burned them before all men, and counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of Silver, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, Acts 19. 19 20. It wrenched out of the clutches of Satan, some of those of whom he thought himself most sure, so mightily grew the word of God, it grew mightily, it incroached upon the Kingdom

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of the Devil! It purſued him, and took the prey It forced him to let go his hold It brought away captive, as Priſoners taken by force of Arms, ſome of the moſt valiant of his army. It fetcht back from, as it were, the Confides of hell ſome of theſe that were his moſt truſty, and that with hell been at an agreement. It made them come and confeſs their deeds, and burnt their Books before all men So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed,

Thus therefore you ſee why Chriſt will have Mercy offered in the firſt place to the biggeſt ſinners. They have moſt need thereof, and this is the moſt ready way to exalt his name that rideth upon the heavens to our help.

Thirdly, Chriſt jeſus would have Mercy offered in the firſt place to the biggeſt Sinners Becauſe by their Forgivneſs and ſalvation, others hearing of it will be encouraged the more to come to him for Life.

For the Thyſician by curing of the moſt deſperate at the firſt, doth not get himſelf a Name, but begets Encouragement in the minds of other deteaſed folk

to

come to him for help, hence you read our Lord, that after through his tender mercy, he had cured many of great diseases, his fame was spread abroad, *they brought unto him all sick People that were taken with Divers Diseases and Torments, and those that were possessed with Devils, and those which were Lunatick and those that had the Palsie, and he healed them and there followed him great multitudes of people from* Galile *and* Decapolis, *and* Jerusalem, *and* Judea; *and from beyond* Jordan, Mat. 4. 24, 25.

See here, he first by Working gets himself a Fame, a Name, and renown, and now men take encouragement and bring from all quarters their Diseased to him, being helped by what they had heard, to believe that their Diseased should be healed.

Now, as he did with those outward Cures, so he does in the proffers of his Grace and Mercy; he proffers *that* in the first place to the biggest Sinners, that others may take heart to come to him to be saved, I will give you a Scripture or two, I mean, to shew you that Christ by commanding that his mercy should

in the first place be offered to the biggest of Sinners, has a design, thereby to encourage and provoke others to come also to him for mercy.

God saith Paul, *who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in our sins hath quickened us together with Christ by (Grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* But why did he do all this? *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his kindness towards us thorow Christ Jesus* Ephes. 2. 4. 5, 6, 7,

See, here, a design. God lets out his Mercy to *Ephesus* of design, even to shew to the ages to come, the exceeding riches of his Grace in his kindness to them thorow Christ Jesus, and why to shew by these the exceeding Riches of his Grace to the ages to come thorow Christ Jesus. But to allure them and their Children also to come to him, and to partake of the same Grace thorow Christ Jesus.

But what was *Paul* and the *Ephesian-Sinners*? Of *Paul* we will speak anon These *Ephesian-Sinners*, They were men

dead

dead in Sins, men that walked according to the dictates and motions of the Devil worshippers of *Diana*, that Effeminate Goddess: Men far off from God aliens and strangers to all good things, such as were far off from them as I said, and consequently in a most deplorable condition as the *Jerusalem-Sinners* were of the highest sort among the *Jews* so these *Ephesian-Sinners* were of the highest sort among the *Gentiles*, (*Ephes.* 2, 1 2, 3, *Acts*, 19, 35. *Ephes*, 2, 11 13.)

Wherefore as by the *Jerusalem-Sinners* in saving them first, he had a design to provoke others to come to him for Mercy; so, The same design is here set on foot again in his calling and converting the *Ephesian-sinners* that in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace! says he *in his kindness towards us thorow Christ Jesus* There is yet one hint behind. 'Tis said that God saved these for *his love*. That is as I think for the setting forth for the commendations of his love for the advance of his love in the Hearts and minds of them that should come after, As who should say, God has had Mercy upon

and been Gracious to you that he might shew to others for their encouragement that they have ground to come to him to be saved. *When God saves one great Sinner, 'tis to encourage another great Sinner to come to him for Mercy.*
He saved the *Thief*, to encourage *Thieves* to come to him for mercy. He saved *Magdalin*, to encourage other *Magdalins* to come to him for Mercy. He saved *Saul*; to encourage *Sauls* to come to him for Mercy, and this *Paul* himself doth say, *For this cause*, saith he, *I obtained Mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all a long suffering for a Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*, 1 Tim. 1 16
How plain are the words Christ in saving of me, has given to the World a Pattern of his Grace, that they might see, and believe, and come, and be saved. That they that are to be born *hereafter* might believe on Jesus Christ to life everlasting.
But what was *Paul?* why he tells you himself, *I am* says he *the cheif of Sinners*; *I was* says he, *a Blasphemer a Persecuter an injurious Person: but I obtained mercy*.
1 Tim

1 Tim. 1, 14 15 Ay, thats well for you *Paul* but what advantage have we there by? Oh very much, saith he; *For, for this cause I obtained Mercy*, that in me *First*, Jesus Christ migh shew all long suffering for a pattern to them which shall believe on him to life everlasting.

Thus there you see this third reason is of Strength, namely That Jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners *because, by their forgiveness and Salvation, others hearing of it will be encouraged the more to come to him for mercy.*

It may well therefore be said to God, Thou dilightest in mercy, and mercy pleases thee, *Mich*, 7. 18,

But who believes that this was God's design in shewing mercy of old; Namely That we that com after might take courage to come to him for mercy, or that jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinner to stir up others to come to him for life This is not the manner of me! O God But *David* saw this betimes therefore he makes this one Argument with God That he would blot out his Transgressions that he would forgive his Adultery

his *Murders*, and horible 'Hypocrisie. *Do it, O Lord*, saith he do it, And *then will I, teach Transgressors thy ways, and Sinners shall be Converted unto thee*, Psal. 51. 7, 8. 9, 10, 11. 12, 13,

He knew that the Conversion of Sinners would be a work highly pleasing to God, as being that which he had designed before he made Mountains or Hills. Wherefore he comes, and he saith, save me O Lord, if thou wilt save me, I will fall in with thy designe, I will help to bring what Sinners to the I can, And Lord, I am willing to be made a Preacher my self, for that I have been a horrible Sinner, wherefore, if thou wilt forgive my great Transgressions, I shall be a fit man to tell of thy wonderous Grace, to others, Yea. Lord I dare promise that if thou wilt have mercy upon me it shall tend to the glory of thy Grace, and also to the encrease of thy Kingdom, for I will tell it; and sinners will hear on't, And there is nothing so suiteth with the hearing Sinner, as Mercy, and to be informed that God is willing to bestow it upon him. *I will teach Transgressors thy way. and Sinners shall be Converted unto thee*,

Nor

Nor will Christ jesus miss of his design in profering of mercy in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners. You know what work the Lord by laying hold of the Woman of Samaria made among the People there They knew that she was a Town-sinner, an Adultress Yea, one that after the most audacious manner, lived in Uncleanness with a man that was not her Husband, But when she, from a turn upon her heart, went into the City and said to her Neighbours, Come Oh how they Came how they flocked out of the City to jesus Christ *Then they went out of the City, and came to him and many of the Samaritans* (People perhaps as bad as her self) *believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, saying, He told me all that ever I did* (John 4. 39.)

That word *He told me all that ever I did* was a great Argument with them for by that they gathered, That tho he knew her to be vile, yet he did not despise her, nor refuse to show how willing he was to communicate his grace unto her, And this fetched over, first, her, then them,

This Woman; as I said, was a *Samaritan sinner*, a sinner of the worst Com-

plexion For the *Jews* abhorred to have ought to do with them (*vers* 9.)where fore none more fit then she to be made one of the *Decoys* of Heaven, to bring others of these *Samaritan Wild Fowls* under the net of the Grace of Christ. and she did the work to purpose, many and many more of the *Samaritans* believed one him, *Verse* 40, 41, 42, The Heart of man tho set on sin, when, it comes once to a perswasion that God is willing to have Mercy upon us, encline to come to jesus Christ for Life witness these turn aways from God, that you allo red of in *Jeremiah*, for after they had heard three or four times over, that God had Mercy for Backsliders. they breake out and said *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God* Or as those in *Hosea* for *in thee the Fatherless find mercy* jer. 3. 22. Hos, 14 1, 2, 3,)

Mercy, and the revelation thereof is the only Antidote against Sin 'Tis, of a thawing nature 'twill lose the heart that is frozen up in sin. yea, 'twill make the Unwilling to come to jesus Christ, for Life,

Wherefore do you think was it that Jesus Christ told the Adulterous Woman, and that

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before ſo many ſinners That he had not Condemned her *but to allure her with them there preſent, to hope to find favor at his hands. (As he alſo ſaith in another place* I came not to judge, but to ſave the World) *for might they not thence moſt rationally conclude, that if Jeſus Chriſt had rather ſave then damn an Harlot, there was encouragement for them to come to him for Mercy,*

I heard once a ſtory from a ſouldier, who with his Company had laid ſiege againſt a Foart, that ſo long as the Beſieged were perſwaded their Foes would ſhew them no favour, they Fout like Madmen but when they ſaw one of their Fellows taken, and received favour they all cam tumbling down from their Fortreſs: and delivered themſelves into their Enemies hands,

I am perſwaded, did men believe that there is that Grace and Willingneſs in the heart of Chriſt to ſave Sinners as the World imports there is they would com tumbling into his Arms: But Satan has blinded their minds, they cannot ſee this thing. howbeit the Lord Jeſus has as I ſaid, that others may take heart and come to him, given out a command-

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ment that mercy ſhould in the firſt place be offered to the biggeſt Sinners. *Begin* ſaith he, *at Jeruſalem.* And thus I end the third Reaſon.

Fourthly; Jeſus Chriſt would have mercy offered in the *firſt place* to the biggeſt Sinners, *Becauſe that is the way, if they receive it, moſt to weaken the Kingdom of Satan and to keep it loweſt in every Age of the World*; The biggeſt Sinners they are Satans *Colonels*, and *Captains*, the Leaders of his people, and they that moſt ſtoutly make head againſt the Son of God. Wherefore let theſe firſt be conquered, and his Kingdom will be weak When *Iſhboſheth* had loſt his *Abner*, his Kingdom was made weak, nor did he ſit but *tottering then* upon his Throne. So when Satan loſeth his ſtrong men, them that are mighty to work Iniquity, and *dextrous* to manage others in the ſame then is his Kingdom weak (2 *Sam.* 3.) Therefore I ſay Chriſt doth offer Mercy in the firſt place to ſuch, the more to weaken his Kingdom. Chriſt Jeſus was glad to ſee Satan fall like lightning from Heaven, that is ſuddenly or headlong;

and

and it was, surely, by casting of him out of Strong Possessions, and by recovering of some notorious Sinners out of his Clutches, (*Luke* 1. 17, 18, 19.)

Samson, when he would pull down the *Philistians* Temple, took hold of the two main Pillars of it, and breaking them down came the House. Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil, and to destroy by converting Grace, as well as by redeeming Blood. Now Sin swarms and lieth by legions, and whole Armies, in the Souls of the biggest Sinners, as in Garrisons: Wherefore the way, the most direct way to destroy it, is first to deal with such Sinners by the Word of his Gospel, and by the Merits of his Passion

For Example, tho I shall give you but a homely one, Suppose a Family to be very Lowzy, and one or two of the Family to be in cheif the breeders, the way the quickest way, to clear that Family, or at least to weaken the so swarming of those Vermine, is in the *first place* to sweeten the Skin Head, and Cloaths of the *cheif breeders*. And then though all the Family should be apt to breed them, the

the Number of them, and ſo the greatneſs of that Plague there, will be the more impaired.

Why, there are ſome People that are in chief the Devils ſin-breeders *in the towns and places where they live the place town, or family where they live, muſt needs be horrible lowſie and as it were, eaten up with* Vermin *now let the Lord Jeſus in the firſt place cleanſe theſe great Breeders, and there will be given a nip to theſe ſwarms of ſins that uſe to be committed in ſuch places through out the town Houſe, or family where ſuch* ſin breeding; *Perſons uſe to be.*

I ſpeak by Experience, I was one of theſe lowzy ones one of theſe great *ſinbreeders*, I infected all the Youth of the Town where I was born with all manner of youthful Vanities. The neighbours counted me ſo, my practiſe proved me ſo, Wherefore *Chriſt Jeſus* took me firſt, and taking me firſt, the Contagion was much allayed all the town over When God made me ſigh, they would harken and enquiringly ſay, *What's the* matter with John? They alſo gave their various opinions of me, but as I ſaid, ſin cooled, and failed and as to his full

carrier

barrier when I went out to seek the bread of Life, some of them would follow, and the rest be put into a muse at home. Yea, almost the Town: *at first*, at times would go out to here at the place were I found good: Yea, young and old for a while had some reformation on them also some of them perceiveing that God had mercy upon me, came crying to him for mercy too.

But what need I give you an Instance of poor I: I will come to *Manasseth* the King: So long as he was a ringleading Sinner, the great Idolater, and chief for Deviliſm, the whole Land flowed with wickedneſs; *For he made them to sin*, and do worse than the Heathen that dwelt round about them, or that was cast out from before them. But when God converted him, the whole Land was reformed. Down went the Groves, the Idols, and Alters of *Baal*, and up went true Religion in much of the Power and Purity of it. You'll say, The King reformed by Power. I answer, doubtleſs and by Example too; for People observe their leaders as their Fathers did, so did they, 2 *Chron.* 33. 2 *King.* 17. 41.

This

This therefore is another Reason, why *Jesus* would have mercy offered in the first place to the Biggest sinners, because that is the best way if they receive it, most to weaken the kingdom of Satan, and to keep it poor and low.

And do you not think now, that if God would but take hold of the hearts of some of the most notorious in your Town, in your Family, or Countrey, that this thing would be verified before your Faces? It would, it would, to the Joy of you that are godly, to the making of Hell to sigh, to the great suppressing of Sin, the glory of *Christ*, and the Joy of the Angels of God. And Ministers should therefore that this Work might go on, take advantages to perswade with the biggest Sinners to come in to *Christ*, according to my Text, and their Commissions: *Beginning at Jerusalem.*

Fifthly *Jesus Christ* would have mercy offered in the first place to the Biggest sinners *because such, when converted, are usually the best helps in the Church against Satans, and fittest for the support of the feeble minded there.* Hence usually

ly, you have some such in the first plantation of Churches; or quickly upon it Churches would do but sorrily if *Christ Jesus* did not put such Converts among them: they are the Monuments and Mirrors of Mercy. The very sight of such a Sinner in God's House, yea, the very thought of him, where the sight of him cannot be had, is oft-times greatly for the help of the Faith of the Feeble.

When the Churches (said Paul) *that were in Judea, heard this concerning me, that he which persecuted them in time past, now preached the Faith which once he destroyed, They Glorified God in me*, Gal. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

Glorified God) How is that? Why, they praised him and took courage to believe the more in the Mercy of God For that he had had mercy on such a great Sinner as he. They glorified God (*in me*) They wondered that grace should be so rich, as to take Hold of such a Wretch as I was; and for my sake believed in *Christ* the more.

There are two things that great sinners are acquainted with, when they come to divulge to the Saints, that are a great relief to their Faith the

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There are two things that great sinners are acquainted with, when they come to divulge to the Saints, that are a great relief to their Faith the

1. The Conteſts that they uſually have with the Devil at their parting with him.

2. Their knowledge of his Secrets in his workings.

For the *Firſt*, the biggeſt ſinners have uſually great conteſts with the Devil at their partings; and this is an help to Saints. For ordinary Saints find afterwards what the vile ones find at firſt; but when at the opening of hearts the one finds himſelf to be as the other, the one is a Comfort to the other. The leſſer ſort of Sinners find but little of this, till after they have been ſometime in profeſſion; but the Vile man meets with his at the Begining. Wherefore he, when the other is down, is ready to tell that he has met with the ſame before. For I ſay he has had it before. Satan is loath to part with a great Sinner, What my true Servant (quoth he) my old Servant, wilt thou forſake me now? Having ſo often ſold thy ſelf to me to work wickedneſs, wilt thou Forſake me now? Thou horrible Wretch, doſt not know, that thou haſt ſinned thy ſelf beyond the reach of Grace, and doſt think to find

Mercy

Mercy now? Art not thou a Murderer, a Theif, a Harlot, a Witch, a sinner of the greatest size, and dost thou look for mercy now? Dost thou think that *Christ* will foul his fingers with thee.

'Tis enough to make Angels blush *saith Satan*, to see so vile a one knock at Heaven gates for mercy, and wilt thou be so abominable bold to do it? Thus, Satan dealt with me Says the great sinner. when at First I came to *Jesus Christ. And what did you reply, saith the Tempted?* Why, I granted the whole Charge to be true, says the other. *And what did you dispair? or how?* No (saith he) I said I am *Magdalen*, I am *Zacheus*, I am the *Thief*, I am the *Harlot*, I am the *Publican*, I am the *Prodigal*, and one of *Christ*'s Murderers, Yea, worse than any of these, and yet God was so far off from rejecting of me (as I found afterwards) that there was musick and dancing in his House for me, and for Joy that I was come home unto him. *Oh blessed be God for grace*, (says the other) *for then I hope there is favour for me* Yea as I told you, such a one is a coutinual Spectacle in the Church, for every one *by*

to

to behold Gods grace, and wonder!

Secondly, And as for the Secrets of Satan such as are Suggestions to question the Being of God, the truth of his Word, and to be annoyed with devilish Blasphemies: None more acquainted with these than the biggest sinners at their Conversion; wherefore thus also they are prepared to be helps in the Church to relieve and comfort the other.

I might also here tell you of the contests and Battels that such are engaged in, wherein they find the buffettings of Satan, above any other of the Saints. At which time Satan assaults the Soul with darkness, fears, frightful thoughts of Apparitions; now they Sweat, pant, cry out, and struggle for Life.

The Angels now come down to behold the fight, and rejoice to see a bit of Dust and Ashes to overcome principalities and Powers, and might, and Dominions. But as I said, when these come a little to be settled, they are prepared for help for others, and are great Comfort unto them. Their great sins give encouragement to the Devil to assault them and by these temptations *Christ* takes advantage

tage to make them the more helpful to the Churches.

The biggest sinner, when he is Converted and comes into the Church, says to them all, by his very coming in, *Behold me all you that are Men and Women of a low and timerous Spirit; you whose hearts are narrow, for that you never had the advantage to know, because your sins are few the largeness of the grace of God. Behold I say, in me, the exceeding riches of his grace! I am a pattern set forth before your faces, on whom you may look and take heed.* This I say, the great Sinner can say, to the exceeding comfort of all the rest.

Where o e as I have hinted before, when God intends to stock a place with Saints, and to make that place excellently to flourish with the Riches of his grace he usually begins with the Conversion of some of the most Notorious there-abouts and lays them as an Example to allure others and to build up when they are converted.

'Twas *Paul* that must go to the *Gentiles*, because *Paul* was the most outragious of all the Apostles in the time

of

of his unregeneration: Yea *Peter* must be he that after his horrible fall, was thought fittest when recovered again to comfort and strengthen his Brethren See *Luke* 22. 31. 32.

Some must be Pillars in Gods House, and if they be Pillars of Cedar they must stand while they are stout and sturdy sticks in the Forrest, before they are cut down, and planted or placed there.

No Man, when he buildeth his House makes the princple parts thereof, of weak and feeble Timber: for how could such bear up the rest? but of great and able Wood. *Christ Jesus* also goeth this way to work, he makes of the biggest Sinners, Beareres and Supporters to the rest. This then may serve for another Reason, why *Christ Jesus* gives out in Commandement, that Mercy should in the first place be offered to the biggest Sinners, *Because such when converted, are usually the best helps in the Church against Temptations, and fittest for the support of the feble minded there.*

Sixthly, Another Reason, why *Jesus Christ* would have Mercy offered in the

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first place to the biggest Sinners, is Because, *They when Converted are apt to love him most*.

This agrees both with Scripture, and Reason. Scripture says so. *To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much to whom little is Forgiven, the same loveth little*, Luk. 7. 47. Reason says so. For as it would be the Unreasonablest thing in the world, to render Hatred for love and Contempt for Forgiveness, so twould be as Rediculous to think that the reception of a little kindness should lay the same obligations upon the Heart *to* love as the reception of a great deal. I would not disparage the Love of *Christ*; I know the least dram of it, when it reaches to *Forgiveness*, is great above all the World; But comparatively, there is greater extentions of the Love of *Christ* to one than to another: He that has most Sin, if Forgiven is partaker of the greatest *Love*, of the greatest Forgiveness.

I know also, that there are some, that from this very Doctrine, say, *let us do evil that Good may come*, aud that turn the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness.

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But I speak of these, These will neither be ruled by *Grace* nor *Reason*. *Grace* would Teach them, if they knew it, to deny Ungodly Courses; and so would *Reason* too: If it could truly sense the Love of God *Tim.* 2. 11. 12. *Rom.* 11. 1.

Doth it look like what hath any Coherence with reason or Mercy, for a Man to abuse his Frind? Because *Christ* died for Men, shall I therefore Spit in his face? The Bread and Water that was given by *Elisha* to his Enemies, that came into the Land of *Israel* to take him, had so much influence upon their minds, tho' *Heathens* that they returned to their homes without hurting him: Yea, it kept them from coming again in a hostile manner into the Coasts of *Israel*, 2 *Kings* 6, 19, 20, 21. 22. 23.

But to forbear to Illustrate till anon one reason why *Christ Jesus* shews mercy to sinners, *is that he might obtain their Love*, that he may remove their base affections, from base objects, to himself. Now if he loves to be loved little, he loves to be loved much, But *there* is not any *that* are capable of loveing much; save *those that* have much, forgiven them

hence

Hence 'tis said of *Paul*, That he laboured more then them all, to wit, with a labour of love, because he had been by Sin more vile against *Christ*, than they all 1 *Cor.* 15. *He* it was that Persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it *Gal.* 1. 13. *He*, of them all, was the only raving Bedlam against the Saints: *And being exceeding Mad*, says he, *against them, I Persecuted them even to strange Cities*, Acts 26. 11.

This raving Bedlam, that once was so sick that now says, I *laboured more than them all*; *more for Christ than them all.*

But Paul, *what moved thee thus to do?* The love of *Christ*, says he. It was not I, but the Grace of God that was with me. As who should say; O *Grace!* 'Twas such Grace to save me! 'Twas such Marvelous Grace for God to look down from Heaven upon me, and that secured me from the warth to come, that I am captivated with the sense of the riches of it. Hence I act, hence I labour; for how can I otherwise do, since God not only seperated me from my sins and Companions, but seperated all the powers of my Soul and Body to his Service?

vice? I am therefore *prompted* on by this exceeding love to labour as I have done yet not I, but the Grace of God with me.

Oh! I shall never forget his love nor the Circumstance, under which I was, when his love laid hold upon me. I was going to *Damascus* with Letters from the High Priest to make Havock of God's people there, as I had made Havock of them in other places. These bloody Letters were not imposed upon me. I went to the high Priest and desired them of him, *Acts.* 9. 1, 2 And yet he saved me! I was one of the men, of the chief men, that had a hand in the Blood of his Martyr *Stephen*, yet he had mercy on me When I was at *Damascus*, I stunk so horribly like a Blood-sucker, that I became a Terrour to all there about. Yea *Ananias* good Man made intercession to my Lord against me yet he would have mercy upon me! Yea joyned mercy to mercy, until he had made me a monument of Grace. He made a Saint of me and perswaded me, that my Transgressions were forgiven me.

When I began to preach, those that heard

heard me were amazed; and said, *Is not this he that Destroyed them that called on this Name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent that he might bring them bound to the High Priest?* Hell doth know that I was a Sinner; Heaven doth know that I was a Sinner: The World also knows that I was a Sinner; a Sinner of the greatest size; but I obtained mercy, *Acts.* 9. 22. 21.

Shall not this lay an Obligation upon me? Is not Love of the greatest force to oblige? Is it not strong as Death? Cruel as the Grave, and hotter than the Coals of *Juniper?* Hath it not a most vehement flame? Can the Waters quench it? Can the Floods drown it? I am under the force of it and this is my continual cry *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the Benefits which he has bestowed upon me?*

Ay! *Paul*, this is something, thou speakest like a Man, like a man affected and carried away with the love & grace of God Now this sense, and this affection, and this labour giveth to *Christ* the love that he looks for. But he might have converted twenty little sinners, and

yet not found, for grace bestowed, so much love in them all.

I wonder how far a man might go among the Converted Sinners of the Smaller size, before on could find one that so much as looks any thing this wayward. Where is he that is thus under pangs of love for the Grace bestowed upon him by *Jesus Christ*? Excepting only some few; you may walk to the Worlds end and find none. But as *I* said. some there are, and so there has been in every age of the Church, great sinners, that have had much forgiven them. And they love much upon this account.

Jesus Christ therefore knows what he doth, when he lays hold on the hearts of sinners of the biggest size. He knows that such an one will love *more* than many that have not sinned half their sins.

I will tell you a story that I have read of *Martha and Mary*; the Name of the Book I have forgot. I mean of the Book in which I found the Relation; but the thing was thus.

Martha saith my Author, was a very holy Woman, much like *Lazarus*, her Brother

Brother, but *Mary*, was a loose and wanton creature. *Martha* did seldom miss good Sermons, and Lectures when she could come at them in *Jerusalem*; but *Mary* would frequent the House of Sports and the Company of the Vilest of Men for lust. And though *Martha* had often desired that her sister would go with her to hear her Preachers: Yea, had often entreated her with Tears, to do it, yet could she never prevail, for still *Mary* would make her excuse, or reject her with disdain for her Zeal and Preciseness in Religion.

After *Martha* had waited long; tried many ways to bring her Sister to good and all proved ineffectual. At last, she comes upon her thus: *Sister*, quoth she *I pray thee go with me to the Temple to day, to hear one preach a Sermon.* What kind of Preacher is he; said she? *Martha* replied, *It is one* Jesus of Nazareth, *he is the Handsomest man that you ever saw with your Eyes Oh! he shines in Beauty, and is a most excellent Preacher.*

Now what does *Mary*? After a little pause, but goes up into her Chamber and with her Pins and her Clouts decks

up her self as fine as her fingers could make her. This done, away she goes not with her Sister *Martha*, but as much unobserved as she could, to the Sermon or rather to *See* the Preacher.

The Hour and Preacher being come and she having observed whereabout the Preacher would stand, goes and sets her self so in the *Temple*, that she might be sure to have the full view of this excellent Person. So he comes in, and she looks, and the first glimps of his Person pleased her. Well *Jesus* addresseth himself to his Sermon, and she looks earnestly on him.

Now at that time saith my Author, *Jesus* Preached about the lost Sheep, the *lost groat*, and the *Prodigal Child* And when he came to shew what care the Shepherd took for one lost Sheep, and how the Woman swept to find her piece which was lost, and what Joy there was at their finding, she began to be taken *by the Ears*, and forgot what she came about musing what the preacher would make on't But when he came to the Application, and shewed that by the lost Sheep, was meant a great Sinner; by the

Sne-

Shepherds care, was meant God's love for great *Sinners*; and that by the Joy of the Neighbours, was shewed what Joy there was among the Angels in Heaven over one great Sinner that repenteth She began to be taken *by the Heart*: And as he spake these last words, she thought he pitcht his Innocent Eyes just upon her, and looked as if he spake what was now said, to her. Wherefore her heart began to Tremble, being shaken with affection and Fear: then her Eyes run down with Tears apace, wherefore she was forced to hide her *Face* with *Her Handkerchief*, and so sat sobbing and crying all the rest of the *Sermon*.

Sermon being done, up she gets and away she goes, and withal, inquired where this *Jesus* the Preacher dined that day? And one told her at the house of *Simon the Pharise*. So away goes she first to her Chamber and there strips herself of her wanton Attire; then falls upon her knees to ask God forgiveness for all her wicked life. This done, in a modest dress she goes to *Simon's* house where she finds *Jesus* set at Dinner. So she gets behind him, and weeps, and drops her Tears upon his Feet like *Rain*

and

and washes them; and wipes them with the Hairs of her Head. *She also kissed his feet with her Lips, and Anointed them with Ointment. When* Simon *the Pharisee perceived what the Woman did, and being Ignorant of what it was to be forgiven much (for he never was forgiven more than fifty pence.) He began to think within himself, that he had been mistaken about* Jesus Christ, *because he suffered such a Sinner as this Woman was; to touch him. Surely, quoth he this Man, if he were a prophet, would not let this Woman come near him, for she is a Town sinner, so Ignorant are all Self Righteous men of the way of* Christ *with Sinners.) But least* Mary *should be discouraged with some clownish carriage of this Pharisee.* And so desert her good beginnings, and her New steps which she now had began to take towards Eternal Life *Jesus* began thus with Simon: *Simon* saith he *I have somewhat to say unto thee, and he saith, master say on there was said* Jesus, *a certain Creditor had two Debters the one owed him Five Hundered pence, and the other Fifty. And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which*

of

of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the Woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this Woman? I entered into thy House thou gavest me no Water for my feet, But she hath washed my Feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this Woman, since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my Feet. My Head with Oyl thou didst not anoint, but this Woman hath anointed my Feet with Ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her Sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little. And he said unto her, thy Sins are forgiven. Luke 7. 36, 37 38, 39. 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46. 47, 48. 49, 50.

Thus you have the Story. If I come short in any Circumstance I beg Pardon of those that can correct me. 'Tis three or four and twenty Years since I saw the Book, yet I have, as for my memory will admit given you the relation of the Matter. However, Luke, as you see, doth more present you with the Substance of the whole Acts!

Alas! *Christ Jesus* has but little thanks or the saving of little Sinners. *To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* He gets not Water for his Feet, by his saving of such Sinners. There are abundance of dry-eyed Christians in the World, and abundance of dry-eyed Duties too; Duities that never were wetted with the tears of Contrition and Repentance, nor ever sweetned with the great Sinners box of Ointment. And the reason is, such sinners have not *great* sins to be saved from; or if they have they look upon them in the *diminishing-glass* of the Holy Law of God. But I rather believe that the Professors of our days want a due sense of what they are; for verily, for the generality of them, both before and since Conversion they have been sinners of a lusty size: But if their Eyes be holden, if Convictions are not shewn, if their knowledge of their sins is but like to the eye sight in twilight, the Heart cannot be affected with that Grace that has laid hold on the man and so *Christ Jesus* sows much, and has little coming in.

Wherefore his way is oft-times to

stop

step out of the way to *Jericho*, to *Samaria*, to the Countrey of the *Gadarens*, to the Coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon* and also to Mount *Calvary*, that he may lay hold of such kind of Sinners as will love him to his liking, *Luke*. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 8, 9, 10. *John* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 9, 10 &c. *Mark* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 20. *Matt.* 15. 21, 22. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. *Luke* 23. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42. 43.

But thus much for the Sixth Reason, why Christ Jesus would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, to wit, because such Sinners when converted are apt to love him most.

The *Jerusalem* Sinners were they that were first converted in some things, all the Churches of the Gentiles: They were of one Heart, and of one Soul, neither said any of them, that ought of the things that they possessed was their own; neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of Land or Houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet

t. &c. Acts 4. 32 33, 34 35 Now now me ſuch another Pattern if you can. But why did theſe do thus? Oh they were *Jeruſalem ſinners*. *Theſe were the Men that but a little before had killed the Pr[illegible] life and thoſe to whom he did notwithſtanding, ſend the firſ[illegible] of Grace and Mercy. And the ſenſe of this took them up betwixt the Earth and the Heaven, and carried them on in ſuch ways and Methods, as could never be trodden by any ſince.* They talk of the Church of Rome, *and ſet her in her primitive ſtate, as a Pattern, and mother of Churches; when the Truth is, they were the* Jeruſalem-ſinners, *when Converts, that out-did all the Churches that ever was.*

Seventhly, *Chriſt Jeſus* would have Mercy offered in the firſt place to the biggeſt ſinners *becauſe Grace, when it is received by ſuch, finds matter to kindle upon more freely than it finds in other ſinners.* Great Sinners are like the *dry Wood*, or like *great Candles*, which burns beſt and ſhines with biggeſt light. I lay not this down, as I did thoſe *Reaſons* before, to ſhew, that when great Sin-

ners

ners are Converted, they will be encouragement to others, though that is true, but to shew that *Christ* has a delight to see Grace the Grace we receive, *to shine*. We love to see Things that bear a good Gloss yea we chuse to buy such kind of matter to work upon, as will if wrought up to what we intend, cast that lustre that we desire. Candles that burn no bright, we like not; Wood that is green will rather smother and *sputter* and *smoak* and *crack*, and *flounce*, then cast a brave light and pleasant heat. Wherefore great Folks care not much, not so much for such kind of things, as for them that will better answer their ends.

Hence *Christ* desires the biggest Sinner, in him there is matter to work by, to wit, a great deal of Sin; for as by, the Tallow of the Candle; the Fire takes occasion to burn the brighter; so by the sin of the Soul, Grace takes occasion to shine the clearer. Little Candles shine but little, for there wanteth matter for the Fire to work upon; but in the great Sinner, here is more matter for Grace to work by. Faith shines, when it worketh towards *Christ*, through the sides of many

many and great Transgressors; and so does Love, for that much is forgiven: and what matter can be found in the Soul for Humility to work by so well as by a sight that I have been and am an abominable Sinner? And the same is to be said of Patience, Meekness, Gentleness, Self-denial, or of any other Grace. Grace takes occasion by the Vileness of the man to shine the more; even as by the ruggedness of a very strong Distemper, or Disease, the vertue of the Medicine is the best made manifest. *Where Sin abounds, Grace much more abounds*, Rom. 5. 20. A black string makes the Neck look whiter; great Sins make Grace burn clear. Some say when Grace and a good Nature meet together, they do make shining Christians, but I say, when Grace and a great Sinner meets, and when Grace shall subdue that great Sinner to it self, and shall operate after its kind in the Soul of that great Sinner, then we have a shining Christian, Witness all those of whom mention was made before.

Abraham was among the Idolaters when in the Land of *Assyria*, and served Idols with his Kindred on the other side

of

of the Flood, *Joſ.* 24. 2. *Gen.* 11. 13. but who when called, was there in the World, in whom Grace ſhone ſo bright as in him?

The *Theſſalonians* were Idolaters, before the Word of God came to them but when they had received it, they became *examples* to all that did believe; in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, 1 *Theſſ.* 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

God the Father, and *Jeſus Chriſt* his Son, are for having things ſeen, for having the word of life held forth. They light not a Candle that it might be put under a Buſhel, or under a Bed, but one a Candleſtick, that all that come in may ſee the light, *Matt.* 5. 15. *Mar.* 4 12. *Luk.* 8. 16 *chap* 11. 33.

And I ſay, as I ſaid before, in whom is it like ſo to ſhine, as in the Souls of great ſinners:

When the *Jewiſh Phariſes* dallied with the Goſpel, *Chriſt* threatned to take it from them, and to give it to the barbarous *Heathens*, and *Idolaters*. Why ſo? For they, ſaith he, will bring forth the fruits thereof in their Seaſon. *Therefore I ſay unto you, The Kingdom of*

God

God shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, Mat. 21. 41, 43.

I have often marveled at our Youth, and said in my heart, What should be the reason that they should be so generally at this day debauched as they are! For they are now Profane to amazement and sometimes I have thought one thing and sometimes another: that is why God should suffer it so to be. And at last I have thought of this: how if the God whose ways are past finding out, should suffer it so to be now, that he might make of some of them the more glorious Saints hereafter. I know Sin is of the Devil, but it cannot work in the world without permission. And if it happens to be as I have thought, it will not be the first time that God the Lord, hath caught Satan in his own design. For my part, I believe that the time is at hand, that we shall see better Saints in the World than has been seen in it this many a day. And this Vileness that at present does so much swallow up our Youth, is one cause of my thinking so. For out of them, for from among them

when

when God sets to his hand, as of old, you shall see what penetent ones, what trembling ones, and what admirers of Grace will be found to profess the Gospel, to the Glory of God by Christ.

Alas! We are a Company of worn-out Christians, our *Moon* is in the *Wane*, we are much more black than white, more dark than light: we shine but a little; Grace in the most of us, is decayed: But I say, when they of these *debauched* ones that are to be saved, shall be brought in; when these that look more like Devils than Men, shall be Converted to *Christ* (and I believe several of them will) then will *Christ* be exalted, Grace adored, the Word prized, *Sions* Paths better trodden, and Men in the pursuit of their own Salvation, to the amazement of them that are left behind.

Just before *Christ* came into the Flesh the World was degenerated as it is now the Generality of the Men in *Jerusalem* were become either high and famous for Hypocrise, or filthy base in their lives. The Devil also was broke loose in hideous manner, and had taken possession of many

many, Yea, I believe that there was never Generation before nor since, that could produce so many possessed with Devils, deformed, lame, blind, and infected with Monstrous Diseases as that Generation could. But what was the reason thereof? I mean the reason from God? Why one (and we may sum up more in that answer that *Christ* gave to his Disciples concerning him that was born *Blind* (was, that the Works of God might be made manifest in them, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, *Joh.* 9. 2, 3. *chap.* 11. 4.

Now if these Devils and Diseases, as they possessed Men then, were to make way and work for an approaching *Christ* in Person; and for the Declaring of his Power, why may we not think that now even now also he is ready to come by his Spirit in the Gospel to heal many of the Debaucheris of our Age? I cannot believe that Grace will take them all (*for there are but few that are saved.*) but yet it will take some, even some of the worst of Men, and make Blessed ones of them. But O! how these *Ringleaders* in Vice, will then shine in Vertue!

They

They will be the very Pillars in Churches they will be as an Enſign in the Land *The Lord their God ſhall ſave them in that day as the Flock of his People, for they ſhall be as the Stones of a Crown lift up as an Enſign upon the Land Zech.* 9. 16. But who are theſe? Even Idolatrous *Ephraim* and backſliding *Judah*, Ver. 13.

I *know there is ground to fear, that the iniquity of this Generation will be purſued with heavy Judgments; But that will not hinder what we have ſuppoſed that God took him a Glorious Church out of the Bloody* Jeruſalem, *yea out of the chief of the* Sinners *there and left the reſt to be taken and ſpoiled, and ſold thirty for a Penny, in the Nations where they were Captives.* The Goſpel *working gloriouſly in a place, to the ſeizing upon many of the* ringleading Sinners *thereof promiſeth no ſecurity to the reſt but rather threateneth them with the heavieſt and ſmarteſt Judgements; as in the Inſtance now given we have a full Demonſtration; but in defending, the Lord will defend his People and in ſaving, he will ſave his Inheritance.*

Nor does this ſpeak any great Com-

fort

fort to a decayed and backsliding s of Christians, for the next time G rides Post with his Gospel, he w leave such Christians behind him, B I *say,* Christ *is resolved to set up h Light in the World; yea, he is deligh ed to see his Grace shine, and ther fore he commands that his Gospel shou to that end, be Offered in the* first pla *to the Biggest Sinners; for by gre* Sins *it shineth most: therefore he sa* Begin at Jerusalem.

Eightly, And lastly *Christ Jesus* wi have Mercy to offered in the *first plac* to the biggest Sinners, *For that by th means the Impenitent that are left beh n will be at the Judgment, the more left wit out excuse.*

God's Word has two edges. it ca cut back-strok and fore stroke. If i doth the no good, it will do the n hurt; 'Tis the savour of Life unto Lif to those that will receive it, but of deat unto Death to them that refuse it, 2 *Cor* 2. 15, 16. But this is not all, the tende of Grace to the biggest Sinners, in th *first palce,* will not only leave the rest or those that refuse it, in a Deplorabl

con

ndition, but will also stop their mouths d cut off all prerence to excuse, at at day. *If I had not come and spoken to to them* (saith Christ, *they had not had n; but now they have no cloke for their*, for their sin of persevering in Impenitence, *John.* 15. 22.

But what did he speak to them? Why ven that which I have told you; to it, That he has in Special, a delight in ving the biggest sinners. He spake his in the way of his Doctrine. he spake his in the way of his Practice, even to he p ri e t of his last breath before m, *Luke*, 23. 34.

Now since this is so, what can the Condemned at the Judgment say for themselves, why sentance of death should not be passed upon them? I say, what excuse can they make for themselves when they shall be asked why they did not in the day of Salvation come to *Christ* to be saved? will they have ground to say to the Lord, Thou wast only for saving of little Sinners, and therefore because they were great ones, they durst not come unto him; Or that thou hadst not compassion for the biggest Sinners,

thers,

therefore I died in despair; will these be excuses for them as the case now standeth with them? Is there not every where in God's book a flat contradiction to this, in multitudes of Promises, of Invitations, of Examples, and the like? Alas, alas, there will then be there millions of *Souls* to confute this Plea; ready I say, to stand up and say, O! deceived World, *Heaven swarms with such as was when they were in the World, to the full as bad as you.*

Now this will kill all plea or excuse, why they should not Perish in their sins yea, the Text says, they shall *see* them there; *there shall be weeping, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of Heaven, and you your selves thrust out. And they shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God*, Luk. 13, 28. 29, Out of which company it is easie to pick such, as sometimes were as bad People as any now breathe on the Face of the Earth What think you of the first Man by Whose sins there are millions now in

Hell

ell? And so I may say, what think you
ten Thousand more besides?
But if the Word will not stifle and
ge them up, I speak now for ampli-
ation sake the view of those who are
ved shall
There comes an *Incestuous* Person to
e Barr, and pleads that the bigness of
Sins was a bar to his receiving the
omise; But will not his mouth be stopt
to that, when *Lot* and the *Incestuous*
rinthian shall be set before him, *Gen.*
. 33, 34, 35, 36, 1 *Cor.* 5. 1 2
There comes a Thief and says *Lord.*
sin of Theft I thought, was such as could
be pardoned by the! But when he shall
e thee Theif that was saved on the
oss, stand by as Clothed with beau-
ul Glory, what further can he be
e to Object? Yea, the Lord will pro-
ce ten thousand of his Saints at his
ming, who shall after this manner exe-
te Judgment upon all, *and convince*
that are ungodly among them of all
ir hard speeches which ungodly sinners
ve spoken against him, Jude 15 16 And
ese are hard speeches against him, To
y that he was not able or willing to
save

ſave Men, becauſe of the Greatneſs o
their ſins, or to ſay that they were diſ
couraged by his Word from Repentance
becauſe of the heinouſneſs of their of
fences.

Theſe things, I ſay, ſhall then be con-
futed; He comes with ten thouſand of
his Saints to confute them, and to ſtop
their Mouths from making objections
againſt their own Eternal damnation.
* Here is *Adam* the deſtroyer of the
World; here is *Lot* that *lay with both his
Daughters*; here is *Abraham* that was
ſometimes an Idolater, and *Jacob* that
was a *Supplanter*, and *Ruben* that lay with
his Fathers Concubine, and *Judah* that
lay with his Daughter in law, and *Levi*
and *Simeon*, that *wickedly ſlew the Sche-
mites* and *Aron* that made an Idol to be
Worſhiped, and that proclaimed a
Religious Feaſt unto it; here is alſo *Ra-
hab* the Harlot and *Bathſheba* that bare a
Baſtard unto *David*; here is Solomon
that great Backſlider, and Manaſſeth
that Man of Blood and a Witch. Time
would fail to tell you of the Woman of
Canaans Daughter of *Mary Magdalen*,
of *Matthew* the Publican, and of *Gide-
on*

, and *Samſon*, and many thouſands more.

Alas, alas! I ſay, what will theſe Sinners do, that have, through their unbelief, eclipſed the glorious largeneſs of the mercy of God, and gave way to deſpair of Salvation becauſe of the bigneſs of their ſins!

For all theſe, though now glorious Saints in Light, were ſometimes Sinners of the biggeſt ſize, who had ſins that were of a notorious hue; Yet now, I ſay, they are in their ſhining and heavenly Robes before the Throne of God and of the Lamb, Bleſſing for ever and ever, that Son of God for thier Salvation, who dyed for them upon the Tree admiring that ever it ſhould come into their Hearts once to think of coming to God by Chriſt: But above all, bleſſing God for Granting of them light to ſee thoſe incouragements is his Teſtament; without which without Doubt, they had been daunted and ſink down under guilt of Sin and Deſpair, as their Fellow ſinners have done.

But now they alſo are all Witneſſes for God and for his Grace, againſt an unbelieving

believing World; for as I said they shall come to *convince* the World of their Speeches, their hard and unbelieving words, that they have spoken concerning the mercy of God, and the merit of the Passion of his blessed Son, *Jesus Christ*.

But will it not, think you, strangely put to silence all such thoughts, and words, and reasonings of the Ungodly before the Barr of God? doubtless it will, yea, and will send them away from his presence also, with the greatest guilt that possibly can fasten upon the Consciences of Men.

For what will sting like this? I have through mine own Foolish, narrow, unworthy, under-valuing thoughts of the love and Ability of Christ to save me brought my self to ever lasting ruine. 'Tis true, I was a horriable sinner, no one in a hundred did live so vile a life as I, but this should not have kept me from closing with *Jesus Christ*: I see now that there are abundance in Glory that once were as bad as I have been; but they were saved by Faith, and I am damned by Unbelief.

Wretch

Wretch that I am! why did not I give glory to the Redeeming Blood of *Jesus*? Why did I not humbly cast my Soul at his blessed foot stool for Mercy? Why did I Judge of his ability to save me by the voice of my shallow reason, and the Voice of a guilty Conscience? why betook not I my self to the holy word of God? Why did I not read and pray that I might understand, since now I perceive that God said then *He giveth liberally to them that pray, and upbraideth not* Jam. 1. 5.

'Tis rational to think, that by such Cogitations as these, the unbelieving World will be torn in peices before the Judgment of *Christ*: Especially those that have lived where they did or *might* have heard the Gospel of the Grace of God. Oh! that saying, *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom at the Judgment, then for them*, will be better understood. See *Luke* 10. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

This Reason therefore standeth fast; Namely, That *Christ*, by offering mercy in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners, now, *will stop all mouths of the im-*

believing World; for as I said they shall come to *convince* the World of their Speeches, their hard and unbelieving words, that they have spoken concerning the mercy of God, and the merit of the Passion of his blessed Son, *Jesus Christ*.

But will it not, think you, strangely put to silence all such thoughts, and words, and reasonings of the Ungodly before the Barr of God? doubtless it will, yea, and will send them away from his presence also, with the greatest guilt that possibly can fasten upon the Consciences of Men.

For what will sting like this? I have through mine own Foolish, narrow, unworthy, under-valuing thoughts of the love and Ability of Christ to save me brought my self to ever lasting ruine. 'Tis true, I was a horriable sinner, no one in a hundred did live so vile a life as I, but this should not have kept me from closing with *Jesus Christ*: I see now that there are abundance in Glory that once were as bad as I have been; but they were saved by Faith, and I am damned by Unbelief.

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sent in the day of Judgment, and cut off all excuse that shall be attempted to be made (from the thoughts of the greatness of their Sins) why they came not to him.

I have often thought of the day of Judgment, and how God will deal with sinners at that day: And I believe it will be managed with that sweetness with the equitableness, with that excellent Righteousness, as to every sin, and circumstance, and aggravation thereof, that Men that are Damned, before the Judgment is over, shall receive such conviction of the righteous Judgment of God upon them, and of their deserts of Hell fire, that they shall in themselves conclude that there is all the reason in the world that they should be shut out of Heaven, and go to Hell-fire; *These shall go away into everlasting fire*, Matt. 25. 46.

Only this will tear, that they have miss of Mercy and Glory, and obtained everlasting damnation through their unbelief. But it will tear but *themselves*, but their *own* Souls; they will gnash upon *themselves*: For in that Mercy was offered

offered to the chief of them in the *first place*, and yet they were damned for rejecting of it: They were damned for forsaking what they had a propriety in; or, forsaking their *Own* Mercy.

And thus much for the Reasons. I will conclude with a word of Application.

The APPLICATION

FIrst, Would *Jesus Christ* have Mercy offered in the *first place* to the biggest sinners? *Then this shews us how to make a right judgment of the heart of Christ to Men.* Indeed we have advantage to guess at the goodness of his Heart, by many things; as by his taking our nature upon him, his dying for us, his sending his Word and Ministers to us; and all that we might be saved. But this of *beginning to offer mercy to Jerusalem*, is that which heightens all the rest; for this doth not only confirm to us, that love was the cause of his dying for us; but it shews us yet more the depth of that Love: He might have dyed for us, & yet have extended the benefit of his Death to a few, as one might call them, of the best-conditioned sinners

ners, to those who (thought they were weak, and so could not but so) ye made not a Trade of sinning; To those that sinned not lavishingly. There are in the World, as on may call them, the moderate Sinners; the Sinners that mix Righteousness with their Pollutions; the sinners that, though they be sinners, do what on their part lies, (some that are blind would think so) that they might be saved. I say, it had been Love, great Love, if he had dyed for none but such, and sent his love to such: But that he should send out *conditions of Peace* to the biggest of Sinners! yea, that they should be offered to them first of all! (for so he means when he says, *Begin at* Jerusalem) This is wonderfull this shows his heart to purpose, as also the heart of God his Father who sent him to do thus.

There is nothing more incident to Men that are awake in their Souls, than to have wrong thoughts of God; Thoughts that are narrow, and that pinch and pen up his Mercy to scanty and beggarly conclusions, and ridged legal conditions; supposing that it is rude

ude and an intrenching upon his Majesty, to come our selves, or to invite others, until we have scraped and washed, and rubbed off as much of our dirt from us as we think is convenient, to make us somewhat orderly and handsome in his sight. Such never knew what these Words meant, *Begin at Jerusalem*, Yea; such in their Hearts have compared the Father and his Son to niggardly rich Men, whose Money comes from them like *Drops* of blood. True says such, God has Mercy, but he is loath to part with it. You must please him well, if you get any from him He is not so free as many suppose, nor is he so willing to save as some pretended Gospellers imagine: But I ask such if the Father and Son be not unspeakably free to shew *Mercy*, why was this Clause put into our Commission to preach the *Gospel*? Yea why did he say, *Begin at Jerusalem*? For when Men through the weakness of their wits have attempted to shew other reasons why *they* should have the first proffer of Mercy, yet *I* can prove (by many undeniable *Reasons*) that they of

Jeru-

Jeruſalem (to whom the Apoſtles made the *firſt* offer, according as they were commanded) were the biggeſt Sinners that ever did breath upon the face of God's earth (ſet the unpardonable ſin aſide) upon which my Doctrine ſtands like a Rock, That *Jeſus* the Son of God would have Mercy in the firſt Place offered to the biggeſt Sinners: And if this doth not ſhew the heart of the Father and the Son to be infinitely free in beſtowing forgiveneſs of Sins, I confeſs my ſelf miſtaken.

Neither is there, ſet this aſide, another Argument like it, to ſhew us the willingneſs of *Chriſt* to ſave Sinners: For as was ſaid before, all the reſt of the Signs of *Chriſts* mercifulneſs might have been limmited to Sinners that are ſo and ſo qualified; but when he ſays, *Begin at Jeruſalem*, the Line is ſtretched out to the utmoſt, no man can Imagine beyond it, and it is a Folly here to pinch and pare, to narrow, and ſeek to bring it within ſcanty bounds, for he plainly ſaith *Begin at Jeruſalem*. The biggeſt Sinner, is the biggeſt Sinner; the *biggeſt* is the *Jeruſalem ſinner*.

'Tis

'Tis true he saith that Repentance and *Remission of sins must go together*, but yet Remission is sent to the Chief, the *Jerusalem-sinner*; nor doth Repentance lessen at all the *Jerusalem-sinners crimes*; it diminisheth none of his Sins, nor causes that there should be so much as half a one the fewer: It only puts a stop to the *Jerusalem-sinners* course, and makes him willing to be saved freely by Grace and for time to come to be governed by that blessed Word that has brought the Tidings of good things to him,

Besides, no man shews himself willing to be saved that Repenteth not of his deeds; for he that goes on still in his Trespasses, declars that he is resolved to purchase his own damnation further.

Learn then to judge of the Lawness of God's Heart, and of the Heart of his Son Jesus Christ, by the Word: judge not thereof by Feeling, nor by the reports of thy Conscience; Conscience is oft times here beguiled, and made to go quite beside the Word: Twas judging without the Word that made David *say, I am cast off from Gods Eyes, and shall perish one day by the hand of Saul, Psal: 31. 22. Sam. 27. 1.*

The Word had told him another thing namely, that he should be King in his stead. Our Text says also, that Jesus Christ bids Preachers in their preaching Repentance & Remission of Sins, Begin first at Jerusalem Thereby declaring most truly the infinite largeness of the merciful heart of God and his Son, to the Sinful Children of Men.

Judge thou, I say therefore of the goodness of the Heart of God and his Son, by this Text, and by other of the same import; so shalt thou not dishonour the Grace of God, nor needlessly fright thy self, nor give away thy Faith, nor gratifie the Devil, nor lose the benefit of his word I speak now to weak believers

Secondly, Would *Jesus Christ* have Mercy offered in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners *to the Jerusalem-sinners? that by this also, you must learn to judge of the sufficiency of the Merits of Christ*, not that the Merits of *Christ* can be *comprehended*, for that they are beyond the Conceptions of the whole World, being called *The unsearchable riches of Christ* But yet they may be apprehended to a considerable degree. Now the way to apprehend them most, is to consider what

what offers, after his resurrection, he makes of his Grace to sinners for to be sure he will not offer beyond the vertue of his *Merits*; because as grace, is the Cause of his merits, so his merits are the basis and bounds, upon and by which his grace stands good, and is let out to sinners. *Doth* he then command that his Mercy should be offered in the *first place* to the biggest *sinners*. It declares that there is a sufficiency in his Blood to save the biggest Sinners. The Blood of *jesus* Christ cleanseth from all Sin. And again, *Be it known unto you Men and Brethren, that through this Man* (this Mans merits) *is preached to you the forgiveness of Sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses*, Acts. 13 38.

Observe then thy Rule to make Judgement of the Sufficiency of the blessed Merits of thy Saviour, if he had not been able to have reconciled the biggest Sinners to his Father by his blood, he would not have sent to them? have sent to them in the *first place* the Doctrine of Remission of Sins, for Remission of Sins; through Faith in his Blood: We are justi-

fied

fied freely by the Grace of God, through the Redemtion that is in the blood of *Christ*. Upon the Square, as I may call it, of the worthiness of the Blood of *Christ*, Grace acts, and offers Forgiveness of Sin to Men, *Ephes.* 1. 7. *chap* 2. 13, 14. *Colos*, 1. 20, 21, 22.

Hence therefore we must gather, That the Blood of *Christ* is of infinite value, for that he offereth Mercy to the biggest of Sinners: I say further, since he offereth Mercy in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners; Considering also that this first act of his, is that which the World will take Notice of, and expect it should be continued unto the end; Also it is a disparagement to a Man that seekes his own Glory in what he undertakes, to do that for a spurt, which he cannot continue and hold out in; This is our Lords own Argument, *He began to build*, saith he, *but was not able to finish* Luke 14. 28, 29, 30.

Shouldst thou hear a man say, I am resolved to be kind to the Poor, and should begin giving with handfuls of *Guineas*, you would conclude that either he is wonderful rich, or must straighten his

is hand, or will soon be at the bottom of his Riches. Why this is the case, *Christ* at his Resurrection gave it out that he would be good to the World; and first sends to the biggest Sinners, with an intent to have mercy on them. Now the biggest Sinners cannot be saved but by abundance of Grace; 'tis not a little that will save great Sinners, *Rom.* v. 17. And I say again, since the Lord *Jesus* mounts thus high at the first, and sends to the *Jerusalem sinners*, that they may come first to partake of his Mercy; it follows that either he has unsearchable Riches of Grace and Worth in himself, or else he must straighten his hands, or his Grace and Merits will be spent before the World's at an end. But let it be believed, as surely as spoken, he is still as full as ever! He is not a jot the poorer for all the Forgiveness that he has given away to great sinners; Also he is still as free as at first, for he never yet called back this Word, *Begin at the Jerusalem-sinners*. And as I said, since his Grace is extended according to the worth of his Merits: I conclude, that there is the same vertue in his Merits to

save

ſave now, as there was at the very beginning.

O the the *Riches* of the *Grace* of *Chriſt* Oh the Riches of the Blood of *Chriſt*.

Thirdly, Would *Jeſus Chriſt* have Mercy offered in the firſt place to the biggeſt ſinners, *Then here is encouragement for you that think, for wicked hearts and lives you have not your fellows in the World*; yet to come to him.

There is a People that therefore fear leaſt they ſhould be rejected of Jeſus Chriſt *becauſe of the Greatneſs of their ſins; when as you ſee here, ſuch are ſent to, ſent to buy* Jeſus Chriſt *to come to him for Mercy*; Begin at Jeruſalem: *Never did one thing anſwer another more fitly in this world than this* Text *fitteth ſuch kind of ſinners. As Face anſwereth Face in a Glaſs, ſo this Text anſwereth the Neceſſities of ſuch ſinners. What can a man ſay more, but that he ſtands in the rank of the biggeſt ſinners? Let him ſtretch himſelf whether he can and think of himſelf to the utmoſt, he can but conclude himſelf to be one of the biggeſt* Sinners: *And what then? Why the* Text *meets him in the very Face, and ſaith,* Chriſt *offereth Mercy*

to

to the biggeſt Sinners: to the very Jeruſalem-ſinners. *What more can be objected? Nay, he doth not only offer ſuch his Mercy, but to them 'tis commanded to be offered in* the firſt place Begin at Jeruſalem. *Preach Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins among all Nations*, beginning at Jeruſalem. *Is not here incouragement for thoſe that think*, for wicked Hearts and Lives, they have not their fellows in the World?

Objection. *But I have a Heart as hard as a Rock.*

Anſwer. Well but this doth not prove thee a biggeſt Sinner.

Object. *But my Heart continually freets againſt the Lord.*

Anſw. Well this doth but prove thee a biggeſt ſinner.

Object. *But I have been deſperate in ſinful courſes.*

Anſw. Well ſtand thou with the number of the biggeſt ſinners.

Object. *But my grey head is found in the way of wickedneſs.*

Anſw. Well thou art in the rank of the biggeſt ſinners.

Object. *But I have not only a baſe Heart but I have lived a debauched life.*

Anſ. Stand thou alſo among thoſe that are called the biggeſt-ſinners. And what then? Why the Text *ſwoops* you all you cannot object your ſelves beyond the Text: It has a *Particular* meſſage to the *biggeſt-ſinner*. I ſay it *ſwoops* you all

Object. *But I am a Reprobate.*

Anſ. Now thou talkeſt like a fool, and medleſt with what thou underſtandeſt not: No ſin, but *the ſin of final Impenitence*, can prove a Man a reprobate. And I am ſure thou haſt not arrived as yet unto that: Therefore thou underſtandeſt not what thou ſayeſt, and makeſt groundleſs concluſions againſt thy ſelf. Say thou art a Sinner, and I will hold with thee. Say thou art a great ſinner, and will ſay ſo too. Yea, ſay thou art one of the biggeſt-ſinners, and ſpare not for the Text yet is beyond thee, is yet betwixt *Hell* and thee, *Begin at Jeruſalem*, has yet a ſmile upon thee; And thou talkeſt as if thou waſt a Reprobate and that the greatneſs of thy ſins do prove thee ſo to be; when yet they of *Jeruſalem* were not ſuch, whoſe ſins I dare ſay, were ſuch, both for bigneſs and heinouſneſs, as thou art not capable

of

of committing beyond them; unless now after thou hast received Conviction that the Lord *Jesus* is the only Saviour of the World, thou shouldst wickedly and despightfully turn thy self from him, & conclude he is not to be trusted to for Life, and so Crucifie him for a cheat afresh. This I must confess, will bring a Man under the *Black Rod*, and set him in danger of eternal damnation, *Heb* 6. 6 *chap.* 10, 29. This is Trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting his Blood an unholy thing. *This did they of Jerusalem*, but they did it ignorantly in Unbelief, and so were yet capable of Mercy; But to do this against professed Light and to stand to it, puts a Man beyond the Text indeed, *Act.* 3. 14, 15, 16. 17. 1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

But I say what is this to him that would fain be saved by *Christ*? His sins did as to greatness, never yet reach to the Nature of the sins that the sinners intended by the text, had made themselves guilty of. he that would be saved by Christ has an honourable esteem of him but they of *Jerusalem* preferred a Murderer before him, but as for him they cried

cried, Away, away with him, 'tis not fit that he should live per haps thou wilt object, *That thy self hast a thousand times preferred a stinking Lust before him.* I answer, be it so, it is but what is common to Men to do, nor doth the Lord *Jesus* make such a foolish life a *Barr* to thee. to forbid thy coming to him, or a *Bond* to his Grace, that it might be kept from thee; but admits of thy Repentance, and offereth himself unto thee freely, as thou standest among the *Jerusalem sinners*

Take therefore incouragement, Man Mercy is. by the Text held forth to the biggest sinners. Yea, put thy self into the Number of the worst, by reckoning that thou mayst be one of the first, and mayest not be put off till the biggest sinners are served; For the bigest sinners are first *invited*; consequently, if they come, they are like to be the first that shall be served. 'Twas so with *Jerusalem*; *Jerusalem sinners*, were they that were first *invited*; and those of them that came first, (and there came three thousand of them the first day they were invited, how many came afterwards none can tell) *they were first served.* Put

Put in thy Name, Man among the *biggest*, left thou art made to wait till they are ſerved. You have ſome men that think themſelves very cunning becauſe they put up their Names in their Prayers among them that feign it, ſaying, *God I thank thee, I am not ſo bad as the worſt*; but believe it, if they be ſaved at all, they ſhall be ſaved in thee laſt place The firſt in their own Eyes ſhall be *ſerved* laſt and the laſt, or worſt, ſhall be firſt The Text inſinuates it, *Begin at Jeruſalem*, and Reaſon backs it, for they have moſt need. Behold ye therefore, how God's ways are above ours; we are for *ſerving* the worſt laſt, God is for ſerving the worſt firſt. The Man at the Pool that to my thinking was longeſt in his Diſeaſe, and moſt helpleſs as to his cure, was firſt healed, yea he only was healed for we read that *Chriſt* healed him; but we read not then that he healed one more there, *Joh.* 5. 1,2,3,4,5,6 7,8,9.

Wherefore if thou wouldſt ſooneſt be *ſerved*, put in thy Name among the very worſt of ſinners. Say, when thou art upon thy knees, Lord! *here is a Jeruſalem ſinner*; a ſinner of the biggeſt ſize

one

one whose burden is of the greatest bulk and heaviest weight, one that cannot stand long without sinking into Hell without thy supporting hand, *Be not thou far from me, O Lord O my strength, haste thou to help me.*

I say, put in thy Name with *Magdalen*, with *Manasseth*, that thou mayst fare as the *Magdalen* and the *Manasseth-sinners* do. The Man in the Gospel made the desperate condition of his Child an argument with *Christ* to hasten his cure *Sir come down, saith he, ere my Child die*, Joh. 4. 49. And *Christ* regarded his haste, saying *Go thy way thy Son liveth*, Ver. 50 *Haste* requirs *haste*. *David* was for speed; Deliver me speedily; hear me speedily, answer me speedily, *Psal.* 31. 2 *Psal.* 69. 17. *Psal.* 102. 2. But why speedily? I am in the *Net*. I am in *trouble* my days *consume* like smoke, *Psal.* 31. 4. *Psal.* 69. 17. *Psal.* 102. 3. Deep calleth unto deep necessity calls for *help great*, necessity for *present* help.

Wherefore I say be ruled by me in this matter; feign not thy self another Man, if *thou hast been a filthy sinner*, but go

go in thy coulers to *Jesus Christ*, and put thy self among the most Vile, and let him alone to *put thee among the Children* *Jer.* 3. 19. Confess all that thou knowest of thy self, I know thou wilt find it hard work to do thus; especially if thy mind be legal; but do it, *lest thou stay*, and be *deferred* with the little sinners *until the great ones have had their alms.* What do you think *David* intended when he said, his wounds stunk and were corrupted, *but to hasten God to have mercy upon him, and not to defer his Cure. Lord* saies he, *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long. I am feeble, and sore broken by reason of the disquietment of my heart*, Psal. 38. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

David. knew what he he did by all this he knew that his making the worst of his case, was the way to speedy help. and that a feigning and dissembling the matter with God, was the next way to a demurr, as to his Forgiveness.

I have one thing more to offer for thy encouragement who *deemest* thy self one of the biggest sinners; And that is thou

are

art as it were called by thy Name, in the *first place* to come in for Mercy. Thou *Man of Jerusalem*, hearken to thy Call; Men do so in courts of Judicature and presently cry out, *Here, Sir*; and then they shoulder and croud, and say, Pray give way, I am called into the Court. Why, this is thy Case, thou great, thou *Jerusalem sinner* be of good chear, he caseth thee, *Mark* 10. 46. 47. 48; 49. Why sittest thou Still? Arise why Standest thou Still? Come *Man* thy call should give thee, *authority* to come *begin at Jerusalem*. is thy call and authority to come Wherefore up, and shoulder it, Man: Say *Stand away Devil Christ* calls me *stand away Unbelief*, Christ calls me: Stand away all ye my discouraging Apprehensions, for my Saviour calls me to him to receive of his Mercy. Men will do thus, as I said, in courts below; & why shouldst not thou approach thus to the Court above: The *Jerusalem sinners*. is first in *thought* first in *commission* first in the Record of Names, and therefore should give attendance with expectation, that he is first to recive mercy of God,

Is not this an incouragement to the biggest sinners to make their Application to *Christ* for mercy? *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden*, doth also confirm this thing that is that the *biggest sinner*, and he that has the biggest burden, is he who is first invited. *Christ pointeth over the heads of thousands* as he sits on the Throne of grace, directly to such a Man; and says Bring in hither the *maimed*, the *halt* and the *blind*; let the *Jerusalem sinner* that stands there behind, come to me. Wherefore since *Christ* says Come, to thee, let the Angels make a *lane*, and let all men give place, that the *Jerusalem sinner*, may come to *Jesus Christ* for mercy.

Fourthly, Would *Jesus Christ* have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners? *then come thou prophane Wretch, and let me a little enter an argument with thee*; Why wilt thou not come to Jesus Christ, since thou art a *Jerusalem sinner* How canst thou find in thy heart to set thy self against such Grace as offereth Mercy to thee, What Spirit possesseth thee, and holds thee back from a sincere closure with thy

thy Saviour Behold God groaningly complaines of thee. saying, *But Israel would none of me. When I called none did answer.* Psal. 81. 11. Isa. 66. 4.

Shall God enter this Complaint against thee? Why dost thou put him off why dost thou stop thine ear Canst thou defend thy self? When thou art called to an account for thy neglects of so great Salvation, what canst thou answer Or doest thou think thou shalt escape the Judgment? *Heb.* 2. 3.

No more *such* Christs There will be no more such Christs Sinner! Oh put not the day, the day of Grace, away from thee, If it be once gone, 'twill never come again, Sinner.

But what is it that has got thy heart and that keeps it from thy Saviour? *Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* Psal. 89. 6. Hast thou, thinkest thou, found any thing so good as Jesus Christ? Is there any among thy Sins, thy Companions, and foolish Delights that like *Christ*, can help thee in the day of thy distress? Behold, the greatness of thy sins

ſins cannot hinder; let not the Stubbornneſs of thy Heart hinder the ſinner.

Objection. *I am a ſhamed.*

Anſwer. Oh don't be aſhamed to be ſaved, Sinner.

Object. *But my Old Companions, will mock me.*

Anſ. Oh! don't be mocked out of Eternal Life, Sinner.

Thy ſtubborneſs affects, afflicts the Heart of thy Saviour. Careſt thou not for this? of Old, *He beheld the City, and wept over it.* Canſt thou hear this and not be concerned? *Luke* 19. 41,42, Shall Chriſt weep to ſee thy Soul going on to deſtruction, and wilt thou ſport thy ſelf in *That* way? Yea, ſhall Chriſt, that can be eternally Happy without thee, be more afflicted at the thoughts of the loſs of thy Soul, than thy ſelf, who art certainly eternally miſerable if thou neglecteſt to come to him?

Theſe things that keep thee and thy Saviour, on thy part, aſunder, are but Bubbles; the leaſt prick of an affliction will let out, as to thee, what now thou thinkeſt is worth the venture of Heaven to enjoy.

Hast thou not *Reason*? Canst thou not so much as once soberly think of thy dying hour? or of whither thy sinful life will drive thee then? Hast thou no *Conscience*? or having one, is it rocked so fast asleep by *Sin*, or made so weary with an unsuccessfull calling upon thee that it is Laid down, and cares for thee no more? Poor Man, thy state is to be lamented. *Hast* no *Judgment*? Art not able to conclude, that to be saved, is better than to burn in Hell; and that Eternal Life, with God's favour, is better than a Temporal Life in God's displeasure? Hast no affection but what is brutish? what, none at all? No affecti, on for the God that made thee? What none for his loving Son that has shewed his love, and dyed for thee? Is not Heaven worth thy affection? O poor Man! which is strongest, think'st thou, God or thee? If thou art not able to overcome him, thou art a fool for standing out against him; Mat 5.25.26 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.* He will gripe hard, his Fist is stronger than a Lions Paw. take heed of him, he will be angry if you despise his

his Son; and will you ſtand guilty in your Treſpaſſes, when he offereth you his Grace and Favour? *Exod.* 34, 6, 7. *Heb.* 10. 29, 30, 31.

Now we come to the Text, *Beginning at Jeruſalem*, This Text, though it be *now* one of the brighteſt Sarts that ſhineth in the Bible, becauſe there is in it, as ful, if not the fulleſt offer of Grace that can be imagined, to the Sons of Men; yet to them that ſhall periſh from under *this* Word, even this Text will be to ſuch, *one of the hotteſt Coals in hell*

This Text therefore will *ſave* thee, or *ſink*, thee, there is no ſhifting of it: If it ſaves thee, it will ſet thee high if it ſinks thee, it will ſet thee low.

But, I ſay, Why ſo unconcerned haſt no Soul? Or doſt think thou mayeſt loſe thy *Soul*, and ſave thy *ſelf*? Is it not pity, had it otherwiſe been thee Will of God, that ever thou waſt made a Man, for that thou ſetteſt ſo little by thy Soul?

Sinner, Take the Invitation; Thou artcalled upon to come to Chriſt. Nor art thou called upon but by order from the Son of God, though thou ſhouldeſt

happen to come of the biggeſt ſinners: For he has bid us offer *Mercy*, as to all the World in general, ſo in the firſt place, *To the Sinners of Jeruſalem*; or to the biggeſt ſinners.

Fifthly, Would Jeſus Chriſt have Mercy offered in the *firſt place* to the biggeſt ſinners? *Then this ſhews how unreſonable a thing it is, for Men to deſpair of Mercy.* For thoſe that preſume, I ſhall ſay ſomething to them afterward.

I now ſpeak to them that Diſpair.

There are four ſorts of Diſpair, there is the deſpair of Devils; There is the deſpair of Souls in Hell. There is the deſpair that is grounded upon Mens deficiency; And there is the deſpair that they are perplexed with that are willing to be ſaved, but are too ſtrongly born down with the burden of their ſins.

The deſpair of Devils, the Damned's deſpair, and that deſpair that a man has of attaining of Life, becauſe of his own Deficiency, are all reaſonable. Why ſhould not Devils and damned Souls deſpair? Yea, why ſhould not man deſpair of getting to Heaven by his own abilities? I therefore am concerned only

with

with the Fourth sort of Despair, to wit, with *the despair of those that would be saved, but are too strongly born down with the burden of their sins.*

I say therefore to thee that art thus, *and why dispair?* Thy dispair, if it was reasonable, should flow from thee, because found in the Land that is beyond the grave; or because thou certainly knowest that Christ will not or cannot save thee

But for the first, thou art yet in the Land of the living; and for the second, thou hast ground to believe the quite contrary; Christ *is able to save to the uttermost, them that come to God by him; and if he were not willing, he would not have commanded that Mercy in the* first place *should be offered to the* biggest sinners. *Besides he hath said,* And let him that is athurst come, and whosoever will, let him take the VVater of Life Freely; *that is, with all my heart. What ground now is here for Despair? If thou sayest,* The Number and burden of my *sins. I answer Nay: that is rather a ground for Faith; because such an one above all others is, invited by Christ to come unto him, yea, promised Rest and Forgiveness*

if they come mat. 11. 28. *What ground then to diſpair Verily none at all. Thy deſpair, then is a thing unreaſonable, and without footing in the World.*

But I have no experience of God's love; God has given me no comfort, or ground of hope, though I have waited upon him for it many a day.

Thou haſt experience of Gods Love, for that he has opened thine Eyes to ſee thy ſins; and for that he has given thee deſires to be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt. For by thy ſenſe of Sin thou art made to ſee thy Poverty of Spirit, and that has laid the under a ſure Ground to hope that Heaven ſhall be thine hereafter.

Alſo thy Deſires to be ſaved by *Chriſt* has put the under another Promiſe, ſo there is two to hold thee up in hope; though thy preſent burden be never ſo heavy. *Matt*, 5. 3, 6. As for what thou ſayeſt, as to Gods ſilience to thee, perhaps he has ſpoken to thee once or twice already, but thou haſt not percieved it *Job*. 33, 14, 15.

However thou haſt Chriſt *Crucified, ſet forth before thine Eyes in the Bible, and an invitation to come unto him, though*

thou

thou be a Jeruſalem-ſinner, *tho thou be a biggeſt Sinner; and ſo no ground to deſpair. What if God will be ſilent to thee, is that ground of deſpair? Not at all ſo long as there is a Promiſe in the Bible that God will in no wiſe caſt away the coming ſinner, and ſo long as he invites the* Jeruſalem-ſinner, *to come unto him,* Joh. 6, 37

Build not therefore Deſpair upon theſe things, they are not ſufficient foundation for it, ſuch plenty of Promiſes being in the Bible; and ſuch a diſcovery of his Mercy to great ſinners of old eſpecially ſince we have withal a clauſe in the Commiſſion given to Miniſters to Preach, that they ſhould begin with the *Jeruſalem-ſinners* in their offering of Mercy to the World.

Beſides, God ſays, They *that wait upon the* Lord *ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings like Eagles*; but perhaps it may be long firſt, *I waited long*, ſaith *David, and did ſeek the* Lord and at length his cry was heard; Wherefore he bid his Soul wait on God, and ſays, for it is good ſo to do before thy Saints, *Pſal.* 40. 1. *Pſal.* 62. 5. *Pſal.* 52. 9.

And what if thou waiteſt upon God all thy days? Is it below thee? And what if God will croſs his Book and blot out the hand-writing that is againſt thee, & not let thee know it as yet? Is it fit to ſay unto God, Thou *art hard hearted*? Deſpair not. Thou haſt no ground to deſpair ſo long as thou liveſt in this VVorld. 'Tis a ſin to begin to diſpair, before one ſets his foot over the threſhold of Hell-gates. For them that are there let them *deſpair* and ſpare not; but as for thee, thou haſt no ground to do it. What! Deſpair of Bread, in a Land that is full of Corn! Deſpair of Mercy when our God is full of Mercy! Deſpair of Mercy, when God goes about by his Miniſters, beſeeching of Sinners to be reconciled unto him! 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19 20.

Thou ſcrupulous *fool, where canſt thou find that God was ever falſe to his Promiſe, or that he ever deceived the Soul that ventured it ſelf upon him? He often calls upon ſinners to truſt him, though they walk in darkneſs and have no light* Iſa. 50. 10,

They have his Promiſe and Oath for their

their Salvation, that flee for refuge to the hope set before them, *Heb.* 6. 17 18.

Despair! *When we have a God of Mercy, and a Redeeming Christ* Alive *For shame forbear. Let them despair that dwell where there is no God, and that are confined to those Chambers of Death, which can be reached by no Redemption.*

A Living Man despair, When he is *chid* for murmuring and complaing; *Lam* 3. 39, Oh! so long as we are where Promises *swarm*, where Mercy is *proclaimed* where Grace *reigns*, and where *Jerusalem sinners* are priviledged with the first offer of Mercy *it is a base thing to despair.*

Despair *undervalues the Promise, undervalues the Invitation, undervalues the proffer of Grace.* Despair *undervalues the ability of God the Father, and the redeeming Blood of* Christ *his Son, Oh unreasonable* Despair.

Despair makes Man *God's* Judge; 'tis a Controller of the Promise a, Contradicter of Christ in his large offer of Mercy; And one that undertakes to make *Unbelief* the great manager of our

Reaſon and Judgment, in determining about what God can and will do for Sinners

Deſpair! It *is tho Devils fellow, the Devils maſter; yea, the Chains with which he is captivated and held under darkneſs for ever And to give way thereto in a Land, in a State and* Time *that flows with Milk and Honey, is an unseemly thing,*

I would ſay to my Soul; O my Soul this is not the place of Diſpair this is not the time to deſpair in; As long as mine Eyes can Find a Promiſe in the Bible as long as there is the leaſt mention of Grace, as long as there is a moment left me of Breath or Life in this World ſo long will I wait or look for *Mercy*; ſo long will I fight againſt Unbelief and Deſpair.

This is the way to honour God and Chriſt this is way to ſet the Crown on the Promiſe; this is the way to welcome the invitation, and inviter and this is the way to thruſt thy ſelf under the ſhelter and protection of the Word of Grace. Never deſpair ſo long as our Text is alive. for that doth ſound

it out, *That Mercy by Christ is offered in the first place to the biggest Sinner.*

Despair is an unprofitable thing, 'twill make a man weary of *waiting* upon God, 2 *King.* 6. 33 'Twill make a man *forsake* God, and *seek* his heaven in the *good things of this World*, Gen. 4. 14, 15, 16. 17. 'Twill make a man his *own* tormenter. and flounce and fling *like a wild Bull in a net*, *Isa.* 51, 20.

Despair, It drives a man to the study of his own ruin, and brings him at last to be his own Executioner, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23. *Mat.* 27. 3, 4, 5.

Besides, I am perswaded also, that Despair is the cause there are so many that would fain be Atheists in the World: For because they have entertained a Conceit that God will never be merciful to them; therefore they labour to perswade themselves that there is no God at all, as if their misbelief would kill God, or cause him to cease. to be a poor shift for an Immortal Soul for a Soul who liketh not to retain God in its knowledge! If this be the best that Despair can do, let it go, Man; and betake thy self to faith, to Prayer, to wait

for

for God, and to hope in despight of ten thousand doubts. and for thy encouragement, take yet (as an addition to what has already been said) these following Scriptures: *The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy.* Psal. 147, 11.

Whence note, They *fear not* God, that *hope not* in his mercy. Also, God is angry with them that hope not in his Mercy; for he only taketh pleasure in them that hope. He that believeth, or hath received his Testimony, *hath set to his Seal that God is true,* Joh. 3. 33. But he that receiveth it not, hath made him a liar, and that is a very unworthy thing 1 Joh. 5, 10, 11. *Let the Wicked forsake his ways, and the Unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly multiply pardons.* Isa. 55. 7. Perhaps thou art weary of thy ways, but art not weary of thy thoughts: of thy unbelieving and despairing thoughts; Now God also would have thee cast away these thoughts, as such which he deserveth not at thy hand *for he will have mercy upon thee and he will abundantly pardon.*

O [illegible] and slow of heart to believe all

that the Prophets have spoken, Luk. 24.25 Mark you here, *slowness* to believe *is a piece of Folly*. Ay! but sayest thou, I do believe *some*, and I believe what can make against me. Ay but Sinner, Christ Jesus here calls thee fool for not believing *All*. Believe *All*, *and despair if thou canst*. He that believes *All*, believes that Text that saith, *Christ* would have Mercy Preached first to the *Jerusalem sinners* He that believeth *All*, believeth all the Promises and Consolations of the Word and the Promises and consolations of the Word, weigh heavier then do all the Curses and Threatnings of the Law. And Mercy *rejoyceth against Judgment*. Wherefore believe *All*, and Mercy will to thy Conscience, weigh Judgment down, and so Minister Comfort to thy Soul. The Lord take the Yoak from off thy Jaws, since he has set meat before thee, *Hos*. 11. 4. And help thee, to remember that he is pleased in the first place to offer Mercy to the biggest-sinners.

Sixthly, Since Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest-sinners, *Let Souls see that they lay right hold thereof*; least they notwithstanding, indeed come short thereof.

Faith

Faith only knows how to deal with mercy; wherefore put not in the places there of *Presumption*. I have observed, that as there are Herbs and Flowers in our Gardens, so there are their Counterfeits in the Feild; only they are distinguished from the other by the name of *wild ones* Why, there is Faith and *Wild Faith*; and *Wild Faith* is *this Presumption*? I cal it *Wild Faith*, because God never placed it in his Garden, his Church, 'tis only to be found in the Feild, the World. I also call it *Wild Faith*, because it only grows up, and is nourished where other *wild notions* abounds. Wherefore take head of this, and all may be well; For this *presumptuousness* is a very heinous thing in the eyes of God: *The Soul*, saith he, *that shall do ought presumptuously (whether born in the Land or a stranger) the same reproacheth the Lord And that Soul shall be cut off from among his People* Num. 15 30

The thoughts of this made *David* trem ble, & p ay *That God would hold him back* from *presumptuous sins, and not suffer them to have dominion over him*, Psal. 19, 13

Now this Presumption, *Then*, puts it self in the place of Faith, when it [illegible] pere[illegible]

pereth with the Promiſe for *Life* while the Soul is a Stranger to Repentance VVherefore you have in the Text, to prevent doing thus, both *Repentance and Remiſſion*, of *Sins* to be offered to *Jeruſalem* not Remiſſion without Repentance for all that repent not ſhall periſh, let them preſume on Grace and the Promiſe while they will, *Luk.* 13. 1, 2, 3.

Preſumption then is that which ſevereth *Faith* and *Repentance*, concluding that the Soul ſhall be ſaved by Grace, though the man was never made ſorry for his ſins, nor the love of the Heart turned therefrom. This is to be ſelf-willed, as *Peter* has it, and this is a deſpiſing the the word of the Lord, for that has put Repentance and Faith together Mark 1, 15, *And becauſe he hath deſpiſed the word of the lord and hath broken the Commandment, that Soul ſhall utterly be cut off his iniquities ſhall be upon him*, Numb. 15 13.

Let ſuch therefore look to it, who yet are, and abide in their ſins: for ſuch, if thy hope, *as they are*, to be ſaved, preſume upon the Grace of God. VVherefore Preſumption and not Hearkning to Gods

God word, are put together; *Duet.* 17. 12.

Again, then men presume when they are resolved to abide in their sins, and yet expect to be saved by Gods grace through *Christ*. This is as much as to say, God liketh of Sin as well as I do and careth not how men live, it so be they lean upon his Son. Of this sort are they that build up *Zion* with Blood and *Jerusalem* with Iniquity; *That judge for reward, and teach for hire, and Divine for money and lean upon the lord*, Mich 3. 10, 11. This is doing things with an *high hand* against the Lord our God, and a taking him, as it were, *at the Catch*! This is, as we say among Men, to seek to put a trick upon God, as if he had not sufficiently fortified his Propoſals of Grace by his Holy word, against all *such* kind of Fools as these. But look to it.

Such will be found at the day of God not among that great company of *Jerusalem-sinners*, that shall be saved by grace but among those that have been the great abuters of the Grace of God in the world. These that say, *let us sin that Grace may abound, and let us do Evil that*

that Good may come, their Damnation is Just' and if so, they are a great way off of that Salvation that is by Jesus Christ presented to the *Jerusalem sinners.*

I have therefore these things to propound to that *Jerusalem sinner* that would know, if he may be so bold to Venture himself upon this Grace.

First, Dost thou see thy sins?

Secondly, Art thou weary of them?

Thirdly, VVouldst thou with all thy heart be saved by Jesus Christ? I dare say no less, I dare say no more. But if it be truly thus with thee. how great soever thy sins have been, how bad soever thou feelest thy heart, how far soever thou art from thinking that God, has mercy for thee, thou art the Man, the *Jerusalem sinner*. that the word of God has conqured, and to whom it offereth free *R*emission of sins, by the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

VVhen the Jaylor cried out *Sirs what must I do to be saved?* The answer was, *Believe on the lord* Jesus Christ, *and thou halt be saved* He that sees his sins aright, is brought to his wits-end by them and he that is *so* is willing to part from them

them, and to be saved by the grace o
God.

If this be the Case, fear not, give n
way to Despair, thou *presumest not*, i
thou believest to life everlasting in *Jesu*
Christ. Yea, Christ is prepared for such
as thou art.

Therefore take good courage and be-
lieve. The design of Satan is to tell th
Presumptuous, that their presuming o
Mercy *is good*, but to perswade the Be-
liever, that is beliving *is impudent bol*
dealing with God. I never heard a pre-
sumptuous man in my life, say that h
was afraid that he presumed; but I hav
heard many an honest humble Soul say
that they have been afraid that thei
Faith has been Presumption. VVhy
should Satan molest those whose ways h
knows will bring them to him? And
who can think that he should be quie
when men take the right course to es-
cape his hellish snares? This therefore
is the reason why the truly humbled is
opposed while the Presumptious goes
on by *VVind* and *Tide*. The truly hum-
ble, Satan hates but he laughs to see the
foolery of the other.

Does

Does thy hand and heart tremble? Upon thee the *Promise* smiles; *To this man will I look*, says *God even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my Word*, Isa. 66. 2.

What therefore I have said of presumption, concerns not the humble in Spirit at all, I therefore am for gathering up the Stones, and for taking the Stumbling blocks out of the way of God's People; and forewarning of them that they lay the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their faces, and that are for presuming upon God's mercy; and let them look to themselves, *Ezekiel* 14, 6, 7, 8.

Also our Text stands firm as ever it did. & our observation is still of force *That* Jesus Christ *would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners*. So then let none *Despair* let none *Presume*, Let none *Despair* that are sorry for their sins, and would be saved by Jesus Christ Let none *Presume*, that abide in the liking of their sins, though they learn to know the exceeding grace of Christ for though the door stand wide open for the reception of the *penitent*, yet 'tis full enough barr'd

barr'd and bolted against the presumptuous sinner. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man sows, that he shall reap.* It cannot be that God should be *wheadled* out of his Mercy, or prevailed upon by lips of dissimulation; *He knows them that trust in him*, and that sincerely come to him by Christ for mercy, *Nahum* 1, 7.

It is then, not the abundance of sin committed, but the not comming heartly to God by Christ for mercy, that shuts men out of doors. And though their not coming *heartly* may be said to be *but* a Sin; yet 'tis *such* a Sin, as causeth that all the other sins abide upon them unforgiven.

God complains of this. *they have not cried unto me with their heart; they turned but not to the most high. they turned feignedly*, jer. 3 10, *Hos.* 7, 14, 16.

Thus doing, his Soul hates; but the penitent, humble, broken hearted Sinner, be his Transgressions red as scarlet red like Crimson, in number as the sand though his transgression cry to Heaven against him for Vengeance, and seem there to cry louder than do his Prayers

or tears, or Groans for Mercy; yet he is safe. *to this man God will look*, Isa. 1. 8, *chap.* 66, 2.

Seventhly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners? then here is ground for those that as to practice, have not been such to come to him for Mercy.

Although there is no sin little of it self, because it is a contradiction of the Nature and Majesty of God; yet we must admit of divers numbers. and also of aggravations two Sins are not so many as three, nor are three, that are done in Ignorance so big as one that is done against light, against knowledge, and Concience. Also there is the child in Sin, and a man in Sin; that has his Hairs gray, and his Skin wrinkled for very age. And we must put a difference betwixt these Sinners also. For can it be, that a Child of Seven, or ten, or sixteen years old, should be such a sinner, a Sinner so vile in the Eye of the Law, as he is who has walked according to the course of this world, forty, fifty, sixty, or seaventy years? now the Youth, this Stripling, though he is a Sinner, is

but

but a little sinner when compared with such.

Now I say, if there be room for the first sort for those of the biggest size; certainly there is room for the lesser size If there he a door wide enough for a Gyant to go in at, there is Certainly room for a Dwarff. If Christ Jesus has Grace enough to save great sinners he has surely Grace enough to save little ones If he cantor, ve *five hundred pence* for certain *he can forgive fifty*, Luke 7, 41 42.

But you said before, that the little sinners must stand by, until the great ones have received their grace, and thats discouraging!

I answer, There are two sorts of little Sinners such as *are* so, and such as *feign* themselves so, they are those that feign themselves so, *that* I *intended there* and not those that are indeed comparatively so. Such as feign themselves so may wait long enough before they obtain Forgiveness.

But again, a Sinner may he comparatively a little sinner, and sensibly a great one. There is then *two sorts of greatness*

sin; greatness by reason of number
reatness by reason of throughness of
onviction of the horrible nature of sin
n this last sence, he that has but one
in, if such a one could be found, may
n his own eys find himself the biggest
inner in the world. Let this Man, or
his Child therefore put himself among
he greatsinners, and plead with God as
reat sinners, do and expect to be saved
ith the great sinners. and as soon, and
heartily as they.

Yea, a litele sinner, that comparative-
y is truly so, if he shall graciously give
ay to Conviction, and shall in God's
ght, diligently weigh the horrible na-
ure of his own sins, may yet sooner ob-
in forgiveness for them at the hands of
he heavenly father, than he that has
n times his sins, and so cause to cry
n times harder to God for Mercy.

For the *greviousness* of the Cry is a
reat thing with God; for if he will
ear the Widdow, if she cries *at all*, how
uch more if she cries most *grievously*?
xod. 22, 22, 23.

It is not the number, but the true sense
f the Abominable nature of Sin, that

makes

makes the cry for pardon lamentable. He; as I said, that has many sins, may not cry so loud in the ears of God, as he that has far fewer; he in our *present* sense that is in his own eyes the biggest sinner is he that sooneſt findeth mercy.

The offer then is to the Biggest sinner, to the biggest, sinner First, and the mercy is first obtained by him that first confesseth himself to be such an one.

There are men that strive at the throne of Grace for Mercy, by pleading the greatness of their necessity. Now their Plea, as to the prevalency of it, lieth not in their counting up of the *number* but in their sence of the *greatness* of their sins and in the vehemency of their cry for Pardon. And it is observable, that though the Birth-right was *Reubens*, and for his foolishness, given to the Sons of *Joseph*; yet *Judah* prevailed above his Brethren; and of him came the *Messiah*. 1 Chron. 5. 1, 2,

There is a havenly subtilty to be managed in this matter. *thy Brother came with subtilty and hath taken thy blessing.* The blessing be longing to *Esau* but *Jacob* by his diligence made it his own

I get

Gen, 27 35, The offer is to the biggeſt ſinner; to the biggeſt ſinner firſt but if he forbears to cry, the ſinner that is a ſinner leſs by far than he, both as to number and the nature of tranſgeſſion may get the bleſſing firſt if he; ſhall have grace to beſtir himſelf well for the loudeſt Cry is heard furtheſt, and the moſt lamentable; pierces ſooneſt:

I therefore urge this Head, not becauſe I would have little ſinners go and tell God that they are little ſinners, thereby to think to obtain his Mercy; for verily, ſo they are never like to have it For ſuch words declare, that ſuch a one hath no true ſenſe at all of the nature of his ſins.

Sin, as I ſaid, in the nature of it, is horrible; though it be but one ſingle ſin as to act; yea, though it be but a ſinful thought; and ſo worthily calls for the damnation of the Soul.

The Compariſon then, of little and great ſinners, is to go for good ſenſe among men: But to plead the leanneſs of thy ſins, or the comparitive harmleſneſs of their quantity before God, arguëth

no ſound knowledge of the Nature of thy Sin, and ſo no true ſenſe of the nature or need of Mercy.

Little Sinner, when therefore thou goeſt to God, though thou knoweſt in thy Conſcience, that thou, as to acts, art no Thief no Murderer, no Whore, no liar, no Falſe Swearer, or the like, and in reaſon muſt needs underſtand, that *then* thou art not ſo profanely vile as others; yet when thou goeſt to God for Mercy, know no mans ſins but thine own make mention of no mans ſins but thine own. Alſo labour not to leſſen thy own but magnifie and greaten them by all juſt Circumſtances, and be as if there was never a Sinner in the World but thy ſelf Alſo cry out as if thou was the only undone Man, and that is the way to obtain Gods Mercy.

It is one of the comlieſt Sights in the World, to ſee a little Sinner commenting upon the greatneſs of his Sins and multiplying them to himſelf till he makes them in his own eyes *bigger* and *higher* than he ſeeth any other mans ſins to be in the World; and as baſe a thing it is to ſee a man do otherwiſe, and

as baſely will come on't, *Luke.* 18, 10 11 12, 13.

As therefore I ſaid to the great ſinner before let him take heed *leſt he preſumes*, I ſay now to the little Sinner, let him take heed *that he dont diſſemble*: For there is as great an aptneſs in the little Sinner to diſſemble, as there is in the great one, *He that hideth his ſins ſhall not proſper*, be he a ſinner little or great *Pov.* 28. 13.

Eightly, Would Jeſus Chriſt have Mercy offered in the *firſt place* to the biggeſt Sinner? *Then this ſhews the true cauſe why Satan makes ſuch head as he doth againſt him*

The *Father* and the *holy* Spirit are well *ſpoken* of by all Deluders and deceived Perſons; Chriſt only is the Rock of Offence. *Behold I lay in Zion a ſtumbling Stone. and a Rock of Offence*, Rom. 9, 33. Not that Satan careth for the Father or the Spirit more than he careth for the Son, but he can let men alone with their notions of the Father and the Spirit, for he knows they ſhall never enjoy the Father or the Spirit, if indeed they receive not the merits of the Son, *He that hath*

the Son, hath Life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life, however they may boaſt themſelves of the Father and the Spirit, 1 *John* 5 12. Again *Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God: He that abideth in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath both the Father and the Son,* 2 John, 9

Chriſt and Chriſt only, is he that can make us capable to enjoy God with Life and joy to all eternity. Hence he calls himſelf The way to the Father the true and living Way, Joh. 14, 6 Heb. 10 19 20. *For we cannot come to the Father but by him* Satan *knows* this, therefore he hates him, Deluded Perſons are *ignorant,* of this and therefore they are ſo led up and down by Satan by the noſe as they are.

There are many things by which Satan has taken occaſion to greaten his rage againſt Jeſus Chriſt.

As firſt, His love to man, and then the many *expreſſions* of that love. He hath taken Man's nature upon him; he hath in that nature fulfilled the Law to bring in Righteouſneſs for Man; and hath ſpilt his Blood for the Reconciling of

of Man to God; he hath broke the neck of Death, put away Sin, deſtroyed the works of the Devil, and got into his own hands the Keys of Death? And all theſe are heinous things to *Satan*. *He* cannot abide Chriſt for this. Beſides, he hath eternal life in himſelf, and that to beſtow upon us, and we in all likelihood are to poſſeſs *the very place*, from which the *Satans* by tranſgreſſion fell if not places more glorious. Wherefore he muſt needs be angry. And is it not a vexatious thing to him, that we ſhould be admitted to the Throne of Grace by Chriſt, while he ſtands bound over in Chains of Darkneſs, to anſwer for his Rebellions againſt God and his *Son*, at the Terrible day of Judgment? Yea, we poor Duſt and Aſhes muſt become his Judges, and triumph over him for ever; and all this, long of Jeſus Chriſt; for he is the Meritorious Cauſe of all this Now though *Satan* ſeeks to be revenged for this, yet he knows it is in vain to attack the Perſon of Chriſt, he has overcome him; therefore he tampers with a company of ſilly Men, that he may Villifie him by them. And they bold fools

as they are, will not ſpare to ſpit in his face. They will rail at his Perſon. *and deny the very being of it*; they will rail at his blood, *and deny the Merit and Worth of it.* They will deny the very end, why he accompliſhed the law, and by jiggs, and tricks, and quirks, which he helpeth them to, they ſet up fond Names and Images in his place, and give the glory of a Saviour to them. Thus Satan worketh under the Name of *Chriſt* and his Miniſters under the name of the Miniſters of Righteouſnes.

And by his Wiles and Stratagems he undoes a world of men; But there is a Seed, and they ſhall ſerve him, and it ſhall be counted to the Lord for a Generation. Theſe ſhall ſee their ſins, and that Chriſt is the Way to Happineſs. Theſe ſhall venture themſelves both Body and Soul upon his Worthineſs.

All this Satan knows, and therefore his rage is kindled the more: Wherefore according to his ability and allowance, he aſſaulteth, tempteth, abuſeth, and ſtirs up what he can to be hurtful to theſe poor people, that he may, while his time ſhall laſt; make it as hard and difficult

difficult for them to go to eternal Glory as he can, Oftentimes he abuſes them with wrong apprehenſions of God, and with wrong Apprehenſions of Chriſt he alſo caſts them into the mire, to the reproach of Religion, the ſhame of their Brethren, the deriſion of the World, and diſhonour of God. He holds our hands while the World buffets us; he puts Bear-skins upon us, and then ſets the Dogs at us. he bedawbeth us with his own Foam, and then tempts us to believe that that bedawbing comes from ouſelves.

Oh! the rage and the roaring of this Lion! and the hatred that he manifeſts againſt the lord Jeſus, and againſt them that are purchaſed with his blood! But yet in the midſt of all this, the Lord Jeſus ſends forth his Herald to proclaim in the Nations, his love to the World; and to invite them to come to him for Life, Yea, his Invitation is ſo large, that he offereth his Mercy in the *firſt place* to the biggeſt Sinners of every age, which augments the Devils rage the more.

Wherefore, as I ſaid before, fret he, fume he, the Lord Jeſus *will divide the*

Spoil with this great one; yea, he shall divide the Spoil with the Strong, because he hath poured out his Soul unto death, and was numbered with the Transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the Transgressors, Isa. 53. 12.

Ninthly, Would *Jesus Christ* have Mercy offered in the *first place* to the biggest Sinner? *Let the Tempted harp upon This string for their help and consolation.* The Tempted wherever he dwells, always thinks himself the biggest Sinner one most unworthy of eternal life,

This is Satans Master Argument Thou art a horrible Sinner, a Hypocrite, one that has a profane heart, and one that is an utter stranger to a work of Grace I say, this is his *Maul*, his *Club*, his Master-piece; He doth with this, as some do by their *most inchanting* Songs, sings them every where. I believe there are but few Saints in the World that have not had this Temptation sounding in their Ears. But were they but aware, Satan by all this does but drive them to the Gap out at which they should go, and so escape his roaring.

Saith

Saith he, Thou art a great Sinner, a horrible Sinner, a profane hearted Wretch, one that cannot be matcht for a vile one in the Country.

And all this while *Christ* says to his Ministers, offer Mercy in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners. So that this Temptation drives thee directly into the Arms of *Jesus Christ*.

Was therefore the Tempted but aware, he might say, Ay Satan, so I am, I am a Sinner of the biggest size, and therefore have most need of *Jesus, Christ*? Yea, *because* I am such a wretch, therefore *Jesus Christ* calls me; yea, he calls me first: The first proffer of the Gospel is to be made to the *Jerusalem sinner*: I am he, wherefore stand back Satan make a *line*, my right is first to come to Jesus Christ.

This now would be like for like. This would foil the Devil: This would make him say; I must not deal with this man thus; for then I put a Sword into his hand to cut off my head.

And this is the meaning of *Peter*, when he saith, *Resist him steadfast in the Faith*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. And of *Paul* when he saith

Take the Shield of *Faith*, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the VVicked, *Epheſ.* 6. 16.

VVherefore is it ſaid, *Begin at Jeruſalem*, if the *Jeruſalem ſinner* is not to have the benefit of it? and if I am to have the benefit of it, let me call it to mind when *Satan* hants me with the continual remembrance of my ſins, of my *Jeruſalem-ſins*. *Satan* and my Conſcience ſays I am the biggeſt ſinner, *Chriſt* offereth Mercy in the firſt place to the biggeſt ſinners. Nor is the manner of the Offer other but ſuch as ſuiteth with my mind. I am ſorry for my ſin; yea, ſorry at my heart that ever ſinful Thought did enter, or find the leaſt entertainment in my wicked mind: And, might I obtain my wiſh, I would never more that my heart ſhould be a place for ought but the Grace, and Spirit, and Faith of the Lord *Jeſus*,

I ſpeak not this to leſſen my wickedneſs: I would not for all the VVorld, but be placed by mine own Conſcience in the very *front* of the biggeſt Sinners, that I might be one of the firſt that are beckned by the gracious Hand of *Jeſus* the *Savior*,

Saviour, to come to him for Mercy

VVell Sinner thou now ſpeakeſt like a Chriſtian, but ſay thus in a *ſtrong Spirit* in the hour of Temptation, and then thou wilt, to thy commendation and comfort, quit thy ſelf well.

This improving of *Chriſt* in dark hours, is the Life, through the hardeſt part of our Chriſtianity. VVe ſhould neither ſtop at darkneſs, nor at the raging of our Luſts, but go on in a way of venturing and caſting the whole of our *Affair* for the next world, at the foot of *Jeſus Chriſt*. This is the way to make the Darkneſs *Light* and *alſo* to *allay* the raging of our Corruption.

The firſt time the *Paſſover* was eaten, *was in the night*; and when *Iſrael* took Courage to go forward, though the Sea ſtood in their way like a devouring Gulf and the Hoſt of the *Egyptains* follow them at the heels; yet the Sea gives place, and their Enemies were as ſtill as a ſtone till they were gone over, *Exod.* 12. 8. *chap.* 14. 13. 14. 21, 22, *chap.* 15, 16.

There is nothing like Faith to help at a pinch; Faith diſſolves Doubts, as the Sun

Sun drives away the Mists. and that you may not be put out, know your time, as I said, of believing is always. There are times when some Graces may be out of use, but there is no time wherein Faith can be said to be so. Wherefore Fath must be always in exercise.

Fath is the eye. is the mouth is the hand and one of these is of use all day long, *Faith* is to see, to receive, to work or to eat; and a Christian should be seeing, or receiving, or working, or feeding all day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder let it lighten. a Christian must still believe: *at what time,* said the good man, *I am afraid, I will trust in the* Psal. 56. 2, 3.

Nor can we have a better encouragement to do this, than is by the Text set before us, even an open heart for a *Jerusalem-sinner.* and if for a *Jerusalem-sinner,* to come, then for such an one when come. If such an one to be saved then for such an one that is saved, If for such a one to be pardoned his great trangressions. then for such a one who is pardoned these, to come daily to *Jesus Christ* too, to be cleansed and set free from

from his common Infirmities, and from the Iniquites of his holy things.

Therefore let the poor ſinner that would be ſaved, labour for Skil to make the beſt Improvement of the grace of Chriſt to help him againſt the temptations of the Devil and his Sins.

Tenthly, would *Jeſus Chriſt* have *Mercy* offered in the *firſt place*, to the biggeſt Sinners? *Let thoſe Men conſider this that* (have or) *may in a day of trial have ſpoken or done what their Profeſſion or Conſcience told them they ſhould not, and that have the guilt and burden thereof upon their Conſciences,*

VWhether a thing be wrong or right, Guilt may purſue him that doth contrary to his Conſcience. But ſuppoſe a man ſhould deny his God. or his Chriſt or relinquiſh a good Profeſſion and be under the real guilt thereof? Shall he there fore conclude he is gone for ever Let him come again with *Peters* tears, and no doubt but he ſhall obtain *Peters* Forgiveneſs. For the Text *includes the biggeſt ſinners.*

and tis, obſervable, That *before this Clauſe* was put into this Commiſſion

Peter

Peter, was pardoned his horible Revolt from his Master. He that Revoltheth in the day of Trial, if he is not shot quite dead upon the place, but is sensible of his wound, and calls out for a *Chyrurgion*. shall find his *Lord* at hand to pour wine and *Oyl* into his wounds, that he may again be healed. and to incourage him to think that there may be Mercy for him: Besides what we find Recorded of *Peter*, you read in the *acts*. some was through the violence of their Trials compelled to Blaspheme and yet are called saints *acts* 26, 9 to 11.

Hence you have a Promise or two that speaks concerning such a kind of Men, to incourage us to think that at least some of them shall come Back to the Lord *their* God. *shall they fall* saith he *and not arise? shall they turn away, and not return?* Jer. 8 4 *and in that day* I *will assemble her that halteth, and* I *will gather her that was driven out, and her that* I *have afflicted. and* I *will make her that halteth a Remnant and her that was cast off, a strong Nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion for ever* What we are to understand by her that halteth

halteth, is beſt expreſſed by the Prophet *Elijah Mich.* 4. 6, 7, *Zeph.* 3. 19. 1 *King* 18. 21.

I will conclude then, that for them that have halted. or may halt, the Lord has Mercy in the Bank and is willing to accept them if they return to him again.

Perhaps they may never be after that of any great eſteem in the Houſe of God, but if the Lord will admit them to favour and forgiveneſs; O exceeding and undeſerved Mercy! See *Ezek.* 44. 10. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Thou then that mayeſt be the Man, Remember this, that there is Mercy alſo for thee, Return therefore to God and to his Son, who hath yet in ſtore for thee, and who will do thee good.

But Perhaps thou wilt ſay, He doth not ſave all re volters, and therefore perhaps not me.

Anſwer, Art thou returning to God? If thou art returning, thou art the Man *Return ye Backſliding Children, and I will heal your backſlidings* Jer. 3. 22.

Some as I ſaid, that *Revolt*, are ſhot dead upon the Place, and for them, w o

can help them? But for them that cry out of their Wounds, 'tis a sign they are yet alive, and if they use the means in time, doubtless they may be healed.

Christ Jesus has bags of Mercy that was never yet broken up or unsealed. Hence it is said, he has goodness *laied up*; things *reserved* in Heaven for his. And if he breaks up one of these bags, who can tell what he can do!

Hence his Love is said to be such as *passeth Knowledge*, and that his Riches are *unsearchable*. He has *no body* knows what; for *no body* knows who! He has by him in store for such as seem, in the view of all men, to be gone beyond recovery. For this is the Text is plain. What Man or Angel could have thought that the *Jerusalem sinners* had been yet on this side of an Impossiblty of enjoying life and Mercy? Hadst thou seen their Actions, and what horrible things they did to the Son of God: Yea how stoutly they backed what they did, with resolves and endeavours to perseve when they had killed his Person, against his Name and Doctrine; And that there was not found among them all that while

as we read of, the least remorse or regret for these their doings. Couldest thou have imagined that Mercy would ever take hold of them, at least so soon! Nay, that they should, of all the World; be counted those *Only* meet to have it offered to them in the *very first place*! For so my Text command, saying *Preach Repentance and Remission of Sin among all Nations, Begining at Jerusalem.*

I tell you the thing is a Wonder, and must for ever stand for a wonder among the Sons of Men. It stands also for an everlasting invitation and Allurement to the biggest Sinners to come to *Christ* for Mercy

Now, since in the Opinion of all Men, the Revolter is such a one; if he has, as I said before, any Life in him, let him take incouragment to come again that he may live by Christ.

Eleventhly, would *Jesus Christ* have Mercy offered in the *first place* to the biggest sinners? *Then let Gods Ministers tell them so.* There is an Incidence in us, I know not how it doth come about when we are Converted. to contemn them

them that are left behind. Poor fools as we are, we forget that we our selves were *Tit* 3, 2, 3.

But would it not become us better, since we have tasted that the Lord is gracious; to carry it towards them so, that we may give them Convincing ground to beleive, that we have found that Mercy which also set open the Door for them to come and partake with us.

Ministers, I say should do thus both by their Doctrine, and in all other respects

Austerity doth not become us neither in Doctrine nor in Conversation: We our selves live by Grace; Let us give as we receive and Labour to perswade our fellow-sinners which God has left behind us, to follow after that they may partake with us of Grace. We are saved by Grace, let us live like them that are gracious. Let all our things (to the world) be done in Charity towards them, Pity them, Pray for them be familiar with them for their good Let us Lay aside our foolish worldly carnal *grandure*; let us not walk the Streets, and have such behaviours as signifie

nifie we are ſcarce for touching of the poor ones that are left behind, no not with a pair of *Tongs*. It becomes not Miniſters thus to do,

Remember your Lord, he was familiar with Publicans and ſinners to a Proverb. *Behold a glutton ous man, and a Wine bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners*, Matt. 11, 19. The firſt part, concerning his glutonous eating and Drinking to be ſure was an horrible ſlander? but for the other *nothing was ever ſpoke true of him by the World.* Now why ſhould we lay hands croſs on this Text, that is chooſe good Victuals, and love the ſweet Wine better than the ſalvation of the Poor Publican? Why not familiar with ſinners provided we hate their ſpots and blemiſhes, and ſeek that they may be healed of them?

Why not Fellowly without Carnal Neighbours if we do take occaſion to do ſo, that we may drop and be yet diſtilling ſome good doctrine, upon their Souls? Why not go to the poor Man's Houſe and give him a *Penny*, and a Scripture to think upon? Why not ſend for the Poor to fetch away at leaſt the Fragments of thy Table, that the Bowels of thy Fellow-ſinner may be refreſht as well as thine?

Miniſters ſhould be Exemplary: But I am an Inferiour Man, and muſt take heed of too much meddling. But might I, I would meddle with them, with their Wives, and with their Children too. I mean not this of all, but of them that deſerve it though *I* may not name them.

But I ſay let Miniſters follow the ſteps of their bleſſed Lord who by word and Deeds ſhewed his Love to the *Salvation* of the world in ſuch a carriage as declared him to preſer their Salvation before his own

them that are left behind. Poor fools as we are, we forget that we our selves were so *Tit* 3, 2, 3.

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Why not Fellowly with our Carnal Neighbours If we do take occasion to do so, that we may drop and be yet distilling some good doctrine, upon their Souls? Why not go to the poor Man's House and give him a *Penny*, and a Scripture to think upon? Why not send for the *Poor* to fetch away at least the Fragments of thy Table, that the Bowels of thy Fellow-sinner may be refresht as well as thine?

Ministers should be Exemplary: But I am an Inferiour Man, and must take heed of too much meddling. But might I, I would meddle with them, with their Wives, and with their Children too. I mean not this of all, but of them that deserve it though *I* may not name them.

But I say let Ministers follow the steps of their blessed Lord who by word and Deeds shewed his Love to the *Salvaton* of the world in such a carriage as declared him to prefer their *Salvation* before his own

own Private Concern For we are commanded to follow his steps, *who did no Sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

And as I have said concerning Ministers, so I say to all the Brethren, carry it so, that all the World may see, that, indeed you are the Sons of Love.

Love your Saviour; yea, shew one to another that you love him, not only by a seeming love of Affection, but with the love of Duty. Practical Love is best. Many love *Christ* with nothing but the lick of the Tongue. Alas! *Christ Jesus* the Lord, must not be put off thus: *He that hath my Commandements, and keepeth them* saith he, *he it is that loveth me*, Joh. 14. 11.

Practical Love, which stands in Selfdenial, in Charity to my Neighbour, and a Patient enduring of Affliction for his Name: This is counted love Right Love to Christ, is that which carries in it a provoking Argument to others of the Brethren *Heb.* 10. 24.

Should a Man ask me how he should know that he loveth the Children of God? The best answer I could give him, would be in the Words of the Apostle *John*; *By this*, saith he, *we know we love the Children of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments* 1 Joh. 5, 2.

Love to God and Christ, is *then* shewn when we are tender of his Name and then we shew our selves tender of his Name, when we are afraid to break any the least of his Commandments. And when we are here, then do we shew our love to our Brother also.

Now we have Obligation sufficient thus to do For that our Lord loved us and gave himself For us

to

to deliver us, From Death, that we might live through him,

The World when they hear the Doctrine that I have asserted and handled in this little Book to wit; That *Jesus Christ* would have Mercy offered in the *first place to the biggest sinners*; will be apt, because themselves are Unbelievers, to think that this is a Doctrine that leads to Looseness and that gives liberty to the Flesh; but if you that Believe love you Brethern, and your Neighbours truly; and as you should you will put to silence the ignorance of such foolish Men, and stop their mouths from speaking Evil of you.

And, I say, let the love of Christ constrain us to this Who deserveth our Heart, our Mouth, our Life, our Goods, so much as Jesus Christ, who has bought us to himself by his blood, to this very end, that we should *be a Peculiar People Zealous of good Works*.

There is nothing more seemly in the World, than to see a Christian walk as becomes the Gospel or any thing more unbecoming a Reasonable Creature, than to hear a Man say *I believe in Christ* and yet see in his Life Debanchery and Profaineness. Might I, such Men should be counted the basest of men, such men should be counted by all, unworthy of the Name of a *Christian*, and should be shunned by every good man, as such who are the very Plague of Profession,

For so it is written, *We should carry it towards them. Whoso has a form of Godliness, and deny the power thereof, from such we must turn away.*

It has oft-times comes into my mind, to ask why What means it is, That the Gospel Profession should be so Taunted with Loose and Carnal Gospelers

pellers? And I could never arrive to better Satisfaction in the matter, than this Such men are made Professors by the Devil, and so by him put among the rest of the Godly A certain man had a Fruitless Figg Tree planted in his Vineyard; but by whom was it Planted there? Even by him that sowed the Tares, his own Children, among the Wheat, *Luke* 13, 6. *Matt.* 13 37, 38, 39, 40. And that was the Devil. But why doth the Devil do thus? Not of love to them, but to make of them Offences and Stumbling blocks to others For he knows that a loose Professor in the Church does more mischief to Religion, than ten can do to it that are in the World

Was it not, think you, the Devil that stirred up the Damosel that you read of in Acts 16 to cry out *These are the Servants of the most high God that shew unto us the way of Salvation*? Yes it was, as is evident, *For Paul was grieved to hear it*. But why did the Devil stir up her to cry so but because that was the way to blemish the Gospel, and to make the World think that it came from the same hand as did her South saying and Witchery, v 16. 17. 18, *Holiness, O Lord, becometh thy House for ever*

Let therefore, whoever thy be that profess the Name of *Christ*, take heed that thy Scandal not that Profession which they make of him, since he has so graciously offered us as we are Sinners of the biggest size, in the *first place*, his Grace to save us.

HAving thus far spoken of the Riches of the Grace of Christ, and of the Freeness of his Heart to imbrace the *Jerusalem-sinners*; it may

not be amiss to give you yet *a*, *a caution*, an intimation of one thing, namely, *That this grace and freeness of his heart is limited to time and day the which whoso overstandeth, shall perish notwithstanding.*

For, as a King, who of Grace, sendeth out to his Rebellious People an offer of Pardon, if they accept thereof by such a day, yet beheadeth, or hangeth those that come not in for mercy until the day or time be past; So Christ Jesus has set the Sinner a day, a day of Salvation, an acceptable time; but he who standeth out, or goeth on in Rebellion beyond that time, is like to come off with the loss of his Soul, 2 *Cor* 6 2 *Heb*, 3, 13, 16, 17, 18. 19, *chap*. 4, 7, *Luk*. 19 41 42,

Since therefore things are thus it may be convenient here to touch a little upon these particulars.

First, That this day, or time thus limited, when it is considered with reference to this or that man, is, *oftimes* undiscerned by the person concerned therein and *always* is kept secret as to the *shutting up* thereof.

And this in the wisdom of God is thus, to the end, no man when called upon, should put off turning to God to another time: Now and to Day, is that and only that which is revealed in Holy Writ, *Psal*. 50. 22. *Eccles*. 12. 1 *Heb*. 3. 13, 16,

And this shews us the desperat hazzards which those men run, who when *invitation*, or *conviction*, attends them, put off turning to God to be saved till another, and as they think, a more fit season and time For many by so doing defer this to do to the day of Gods patience and long-suffering is end-

ended: and then, for their Prayers and after mercy, they receive nothing but mocks are laughed at by the God of Heaven, *Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. *Isa* 65 12, 13, 14, 15, *chap.* 66 4. *Zech.* 7. 11, 12, 13.

Secondly, Another thing to be considered is this namely, that the day of God's grace with some men *begins* sooner and also *sooner* ends than it doth with others. Those at the *first* hour of the day, had their call sooner than they who were called upon to turn to God at the sixth hour of the day; yea and they who were hired at the Third hour, had their call sooner than they who were called at the eleventh, *Matt.* 20. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

1, The day of God's patience began with *Ishmael* and also ended, before he was twenty years old. At thirteen years of age he was Circumcised; and the next year after *Isaac* was born, and then *Ishmael* was fourteen years old Now that day that *Isaac* was weaned, that was *Ishmael* rejected and suppose that *Isaac* was three years Old before he was weaned; that day was but the seventeenth year of *Ishmael* wherefore then of Gods grace was ended with him betimes, *Gen.* 27, 24, 25, *chap* 21. 2, 3, 4. 5, 8, 9. 10 *Gal* 4 30

2. *Cains* day ended with him betimes for after God had rejected him, he lived to beget many Children, and build a City, and to do many other things.

But alas, all that while he was a Fugitive and a Vagabond. Nor carried he any thing with him after the day of his rejection was come, but this doleful language in his Conscience, *From God's Face shall I be hid*, Gen. 4, 10, 11, 12 13, 14.

3, *Esau*, Through his extravagancies would needs

needs go ſell his Birth right, not fearing) as other confident fools) but that yet the bleſſing would ſtill be his, after which he lived many years, but all of them under the wrath of God, as was when time came, made appear to his deſtruction; for *when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears* Heb. 12, 14, 15, 16.

Many Inſtances might be given, as to ſuch tokens of the diſpleaſue of God againſt ſuch as ſool away, as the Wiſe Man has it, the prize which is put into their hand, *Prov.* 17. 16.

Let theſe things therefore be a further caution to thoſe that ſit under the Glorious ſonnd of the Gospel, and hear of the Riches of the grace of God in Chriſt to poor ſinners.

To ſlight Grace, to deſpiſe Mercy, and to ſtop the *Ear* when God ſpeaks, when he ſpeaks, ſuch great things, ſo much to our profit, is a great provocation

He offereth, he calls he woes, he invites, he prays, he beſeeches us, in this day of his Grace to be reconciled to him: ye, and has provided for us the means of reconciliation himſelf: Now this deſpiſed, muſt needs be provoking, and it is a Fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But ſome may may ſay unto me, Fain I would be ſaved, fain I would be ſaved by Chriſt. But I Fear this day of Grace is paſt, and that I ſhall periſh, notwithſtanding the Exceeding riches of the Grace of God,

Anſwer, To this doubt I would Anſwer ſeveral things.

Firſt, With reſpect to this day,

Secondly, With respect to thy *Desires*.

Thirdly, With respect to thy Fears.

First, With respect to the day; That is whether it be ended with a man or no,

1. Art thou jogged, and shaken, and molested at the Hearing of the Word? Is thy Conscience awakened and convinced then that thou art at present in a perishing state, and that thou hast need to cry to God for mercy? This is a hopeful sign that this day of Grace is not past with thee. For usually they that are past Grace are also in their Conscience past feeling, being seared with a hot Iron Eph. 4 18. 19. 1 Tim 4. 1. 2,

Consequently those past Grace must be such as are denied the awakening fruits of the Word Preached. *The dead that hear*, saies Christ shall live, at least wise Christ has not quite done with them; the day of Gods Patience is not at an end with them, *John.* 5 25.

2. Is there in thy more retired condition, Arguings, Struglings, and Strivings with thy Spirit to perswade thee of the vanity of what vain things thou lovest and to win thee in thy Soul to a choice of Christ Jesus and his Heavenly things? Take heed and Rebel not, for the day of Gods grace and patience will not be past with thee till he saith, *His Spirit shall strive no more with thee* for then the woe comes, when *he shall depart from them*, and when he saies to the means of Grace, *Let them alone*, Hos. 4. 17, chap. 9 12.

3. Art thou visited in the Night seasons with dreams about thy state, and that thou are in danger of being lost? Hast thou Heart shaken apprehensions when deep sleeps, upon thee, of Hell Death and Judgment to come? These are signs that God has not wholly left thee, or cast thee

behind

behind his back for ever. *For God ſpeaks once, yea twice, yet man perceives it not, in a dream, in a Viſion of the Night, when deep ſleep falls upon man in ſlumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and ſealeth their inſtruction, that he may with draw man from his purpoſe* (his ſinful purpoſes) *and hide Pride from man* Job. 33. 14, 15. 16, 17.

All this while God has not left the ſinner, nor is come to the end of his patience towards him but ſtands, at leaſt with the door of Grace a Jare in his hand, as being loth as yet to bolt it againſt him.

4. Art thou followed with affliction, and doſt thou hear Gods angry voice in thy afflictions? Doth he ſend with the affliction, an *Interpreter* to ſhew thee thy vileneſs, and why or wherefore the hand of God is upon thee, and upon what thou haſt; to wit that it is for thy ſinning againſt him and that thou mighteſt be turned to him? if ſo thy *Summer* is not quite ended, thy *Harveſt* is not yet quite over and gone. Take heed, ſtand out no longer, leaſt he cauſe darkneſs and leaſt thy Feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains and leſt while you look for light, he turn it into the ſhadow of Death, and make it groſs darkneſs, *Jer.* 8. 20. *chap* 13. 15, 16 17.

5. Art thou croſſed, diſappointed and waylaid and overthrown in all thy Fooliſh ways and doings? This is a ſign God has not quite left thee but that he ſtill waits upon thee to turn thee. Conſider, I ſay, has he made a hedge, and a Wall to ſtop thee? Has he croſſed thee in all thou putteſt thy hand unto? Take it as a call to turn to him for by his thus dooing he ſhews he has a mind to give thee a better portion. For uſually when God gives up men, and reſolves to

et them alone in the broad way, he gives them Rope, and lets them have their desires in all hurtful things, *Hos.* 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, *Psal.* 73. 3, 4, 5. 6. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 12, *Rom.* 11. 9.

Therefore take heed to This also, that thou strive not against this hand of God but b take thy self to serious enquiery into the causes of this hand of God upon thee, and encline to think, 'tis because the Lord would have thee look to that which is better then what thou wouldst satisfie thy self withall. When *God* had a mind to make the Prodigal go home to his Father he sent a Famine upon him, and denied him a Belly full of the Husks which the *Swine* did eat. And observe it, now he was in his strait, betook him to Consideration of the good that there was in his Fathers House; yea he, resolved to home to his Father, and his Father dealt well with him, he received him with Musick and danceing, because he had received him safe and sound, *Luke*, 15 14. 15, 16. 17, 18, 19, 20. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30 31, 32.

6. Hast thou any inticing touches of the word of God upon thy mind? doth, as it were, some holy word of God, give a glance upon thee, cast a smile upon thee, let fall, though it be but one drop of its Favour upon thy Spirit; yea though it staies but one moment with thee? *O!* then the day of Grace is not past! The Gate of Heaven is not shut! Nor Gods Heart and Bowels withdrawn from thee as yet. Take heed therefore, and beware that thou make much *of* the Heavenly *Gift*, and *of* that good word *of* God *of* the which he has made thee tast. Beware I say, and take heed, there may be a Falling away *for* all this; but

but I say, as yet; God has not left *thee as yet he has not cast thee off*, *Heb*, 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 8.

Secondly, With respect to thy desires, what, are they? Wouldst thou be saved? Wouldst thou be saved with a thorow salvation? Wouldst thou be saved from guilt, and filth too? Wouldst thou be the servant of thy Saviour? Art thou indeed weary of the service of thy old Master the Devil, Sin and the World? And has these desires put thy Soul to the flight? Hast thou through desires betake thy self to thy heel Dost fly to him that is a Saviour from the wrath to come, for life? *If* these be thy desires, and if they be unfeigned, fear not: Thou art one of those *Runaways* which God has commanded our Lord to receive, and, and not to send thee back to the Devil thy Master again, but to give thee a place in, his House, even the place in his House, even the place which liketh thee best. *Thou shalt not deliver to his Master* saies he, *the Servant which is escaped from his Master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall chuse, in one of thy Gates where it liketh him best thou shalt not oppress him*, Duet. 23. 15, 16.

This is a command to the Church, consequently to the Head of the Church, for all commands from God come to her through her head. Whence I conclude, that, that as *Israel* of old was to receive the runaway Servant who escaped from a Heathen Master to them, and should not dare to send him back to his Master again: So Christs Church now and consequently Christ himself may not, will not refuse that soul that has made his escape from *Sin*, *Satan* the World and hell, unto him, but certainly let him dwell in his *House*, a

mong his Saints in that place which he shall chuse even where it liketh him best, For he says in another place, *And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*, In no wise let his crimes be what they will, either for nature, multitude, or th' attendence of agravating circumstances.

Wherefore if thy Desires be firm, sound, unfeigned, to become the saved of Christ, and his servant? Fear not, he will not, he will in no wise put thee away or turn thee over to thy old Master again.

Thirdly, As to thy fears whatever they are, let that be supposed which is supposed before, and they are groundless and so of no weight.

Object, *But I am afraid I am not elect or chosen to a salvation though you called me fool a little before for so fearing*,

Ans. Though election is in order, before calling as to God, yet the knowledge of calling must go before the belief of my election, as to my self wherefore Souls that doubt of the truth of their Effectual Calling do but plunge themselves into a deeper labyrinth of confusion, that concern themselves with their election I mean while they labour to know it before they prove their calling, *Make your calling and* so your Election sure, 2 Pet, 1 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,

Wherefore at present, lay the thoughts of thy election by, and ask thy self these questions; *Do* I see my lost Condition Do I see? *Salvation* is no where but in Christ? Would I share in this salvation by Faith of him? And would I, as was said afore be throughly saved, so wit from the filth as from the guilt? Do I love Christ his Father, his Saints, his Word and ways? This is the way to prove we are elect. Wherefore sinner when Satan or thine own heart seek to

puzzle

puzzle thee with *Election* say thou I cannot tend to talk of this point now, but stay 'till I know that I am called of *God* to the Fellowship of his Son and then I will shew you that I am Elect, and that my Name is written in the book of Life.

If poor *Distressed Souls* would observe this Order, they might save themselves the trouble of an *unprofitable* labour under these unseasonable and *Soul* sinking doubts.

Let us therefore, upon the sight of our wretchedness, fly and venturously leap into the Arms of Christ, which are now as open to receive us into his Bosom, as they were when nailed to the Cross. This is coming to Christ for Life aright this is right *runing away from thy Master to him* As was said before. And for this we have multitudes of *Scriptures* to support, incourage, and comfort us in our so doing.

But now let him that doth thus, be sure to look for it, for *Satan* will be with him to morrow to see if he can get him again to his Old service; and if he cannot do that then will he enter into dispute with him, to wit about whether he be elect to life, and called indeed to partake of this Christ, to whom he is fled for succour, or whether he coms to him of his own presumptious mind; Therefore we are bid, as to come, so to Arm our selves with that Armour which God has provided; that we may resist; quench, stand against, and withstand all the Fiery Darts of the Devil, *Ephes.* 6 11, 12, 13 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

If therefore thou findest Satan in this Order to march against thee, remember that thou hadst this *Item* about it; and betake thy self to Faith and good courage; and be sober, and hope to the End.

Object. *But how if I should have sinned the*

ſin unpardonable, or That called the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

Anſ. If thou haſt, thou art loſt for ever: But yet before it is concluded by thee that thou haſt ſo ſinned, know that they that would be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt through Faith in his Blood, cannot be counted for ſuch.

1 Becauſe of the Promiſe, for that muſt not be fruſtrate: And that ſays, *And him that cometh to Chriſt, he will in no wiſe caſt.* And again *Whoſo will, let him take of the Water of Life freely*, Joh. 6, 37, Rev, 21, 6, chap 22, 17.

But, I ſay, how can theſe Scriptures be fulfilled, if he that would indeed be ſaved as before, has ſinned the ſin unpardonable? The Scriptures muſt not be made void, nor their truth be paſt to the ground, Here's a Promiſe & here's a Sinner, a Promiſe, that ſays ſhe ſhall not be caſt out that comes, and the ſinner comes, wherefore he muſt be received: Conſequently, he that comes to Chriſt for life, has not, cannot have ſinned that ſin for which there is no forgiveneſs.

And this might ſuffice for an anſwer to any coming ſoul, that Fears, though he comes, that he has ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt,

2. But again, He that has ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt cannot come, has no heart to come; can by no means be made willing to come to Jeſus Chriſt for life; for that he has received ſuch an opinion of him, and of his things, as deters and holds him back.

1. He counteth this bleſſed Perſon, this Son of God, a *Magician*, a *Conjurer*, a *Witch*, or one that did, when he was in the World, what he did, by the *power*, and ſpirit of the Devil, *Mat.* 9, 34, *Mat.* 12, 24, 25, &c. *Mat.* 3, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

27, 28, 29, 30. Now he that has this Opinion of this Jeſus, cannot be willing to caſt himſelf at his foot for Life, or to come to him as the only way to God and to Salvation. And hence 'tis ſaid again, that ſuch an one puts him to open ſhame and treadeth him under foot, that is, by contemning reproaching, vilifying, and deſpiſing of him, as if he were the vileſt one, or the greateſt Cheat in the World: and has therefore, as to his eſteem of him, called him accurſed, crucified him to himſelf, or counted him one hanged, as one of the worſt of Malefactors, *Heb.* 6. 6. And *chap.* 10, 29, 1 *Cor.* 12. 3.

2. *His* Blood, which is the meritorious cauſe of mans redemption, even the Blood *of the everlaſting Covenant, he counteth an unholy thing*, or that which has no more vertue in it to ſave a Soul from ſin than has the Blood of a Dog, *Heb.* 10. 29, For when the Apoſtle ſays, *he counts it an unholy thing* he means, he makes it of leſs value than that of a *Sheep* or *Cow* which were clean according to the Law. And therefore muſt mean, that his blood was of no more worth to him in his account, than was the blood of a *Dog* an *Aſs* or *a Swine*, which always was, as to ſacrifices, rejected by the God of Heaven, as unholy or unclean.

Now he who has no better eſteem of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his Death and blood, will not be preſwaded to come to him for Salvation.

3. But farther, all this muſt be done againſt manifeſt Tokens to prove the contary, or after the ſhining of Goſpel Light upon the ſoul, or ſome conſiderable profeſſion of him as the *Meſſias*, or that he was the Saviour of the World

1. It muſt be done againſt manifeſt tokens to prove the contrary; and thus the reprobate Jews

committed it, when they saw the works of God which put forth themselves in him and called them the works of the Devil and *Belzebub*.

2. It must be done against some shining light of the Gospel *upon them*. And thus it was with *Judas*, and with those, who after they were enlightned, and had tasted, and had felt, something of the Powers of the World to come, fell away from the Faith of him, and put him to open shame and disgrace, *Heb* 6. 5, 6.

3. It must also be done after, an in opposition to ones own open profession of him. *For if after they have escaped the pollution of the World through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the begining; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy Commandment (which is the word of Faith) delivered unto them.*

4. All this must be done openly, before *witnesses* in the Face, sight and view of the World by *Word*, and *Act*, *This is the sin that is unpardonable*, and he that hath *thus* done, can *never*, 'tis *impossible*, he ever should be renewed again to repentance, and that for a double reason; first such an one doth say, *he will not*; and of him God says *he shall not* have the benefit of Salvation by him.

Object. *But if this be the sin unpardonable, why is it called the sin against the Holy Ghost, and not rather the sin against the Son of God?*

Answ. It is called the sin against the Holy Ghost because such count the works he did which were done by the *Spirit* of God, the works of the Spirit of the *Devil*. Also because all such as so reject Christ Jesus the *Lord*, they do it in despight

pight of that Teſtimony which the Holy Ghoſt has given of him in the Holy Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the breathings of the Holy Ghoſt, as in all other things, ſo in that Teſtimony they bear of the Perſon, of the works, Sufferings, Reſurrection, and Aſcention of Jeſus Chriſt.

Sinner, *This is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.* What ſayſt thou? Haſt thou committed it, nay I know thou haſt not, if thou wouldſt be ſaved by Chriſt. Yea, 'tis impoſſible thou ſhouldſt have done it, if indeed thou wouldſt be ſaved by him No man can *deſire* to be ſaved by him, whom he yet judgeth to be an Impoſter, a Magician, a Witch. No *Man* can hope for redemption by that Blood which he yet counteth an unholy thing. Nor will God ever ſuffer ſuch an one to repent who has, after light, and profeſſion of him, thus horribly, and Devil-like, contemned and trampled upon him.

True, Words and Warrs and Blaſphemies againſt this *Son of Man* are pardonable; but then they muſt be done ignorantly and in Unbelief. Alſo all Blaſphemous thoughts are likewiſe ſuch as may be paſſed by, if the Soul afflicted with them, indeed is ſorry for them, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. 14. 15, *Mar.* 3. 28.

All but this Sinner, all but this! if *God* had ſaid he will Forgive one *Sin*, it had been undeſerved Grace: But when he ſays, he will pardon all but one, this is grace to the height. Nor is that one unpardonable otherwiſe, but becauſe the Saviour that ſhould ſave them is rejected and put away.

Jacob's Ladder Chriſt is *Jacobs* Ladder that reacheth up to Heaven, and he that refuſeth to go by this Ladder thither, will ſcarce by other means get up ſo high, There is none other name given

given under heaven among *Men*, whereby we must be saved. There is none other Sacrifice for Sin than his, he also, and he only, is the Mediator that reconcileth Men to God. And, Sinner if thou wouldst be saved by him, his Benefits are thine, yea, thou art a great and *Jerusalem*-Transgressor.

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